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The Interrelation Between the Gendered Body and Holiness in Late Medieval Hagiography

‘The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us’: The Interrelation Between the Gendered Body and Holiness in Late Medieval Hagiography

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Abstract

With hagiography as a site of fantasy and didacticism, disruptive bodies could not only 'hide in plain sight' but explore and push the boundaries on how holiness could be defined and reconstructed. This thesis argues that the saint's body acts as a mirror, performing as both a model of imitation and a reflection of social structures and constraints. The wide dissemination and popularity of saints' lives throughout medieval Europe reflects the importance of the saint in the clerical and lay communities. By studying vernacular saints' lives from the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438) and popular English hagiographers, such as John Lydgate and Osbern Bokenham, my research provides a nuanced and historical-sensitive reading of Luce Irigaray's argument that dominant discourse is male-gendered due to the appropriation of the divine in man's image. I have examined a range of hagiographies, from male kings to virgin martyrs, mother saints to trans* saints, alongside key trends in devotional practices, such as the feminisation of Christ's body and the meditation of Mary as a model of sacrifice. I have addressed the gendered frameworks of the period. In particular, the construction of the male body as default and the female body as secondary and humoral theory, which determined the female body as a porous, opened space in need of protection against internal and external sin. I also engage with key scholarship in the field from Caroline Walker Bynum, Amy Hollywood, and Karma Lochrie. My research concludes that the saint's body is envisioned as a site of identification for the shared flesh of Mary and Christ. This flesh can be read as a 'genre' – an embodied text that dramatizes and disrupts gendered structures, disconnected from gendered binarism it emulates the one-sex body model of the middle ages.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: DATE:

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Introduction: The Interrelation Between the Gendered Body and Holiness in Late Medieval Hagiography

For we seo God becomun yn mannus flech
That bote hasse broght of all oure bale,
Awey oure synnus for to wesche.
A mey hym harburd yn hur hall;
Sche socourd hym sothly yn hur sale
And hel that hend yn hur arest.
Foll trewly mey sche tell that tale
That *verbum caro factum est*.[1]

Do our cultural constructs of gender influence our perception of God and path towards piety? This question has garnered much theological and philosophical thought since ancient Christianity. In Jerome of Stridon's (c. 347 - 420AD) *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios* (c. 387AD), he wrote 'as long as woman is for birth and children, she is as different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called a man'.[2] Jerome's commentary placed men and women in opposition. Femaleness is aligned with the domestic, the result of the carnalities of the flesh, and the permeable boundaries of the body. In contrast, maleness correlated with the soul: reason, contemplation, and salvation through Christ. This polarity indicated the hierarchal categories of men and women who stood as superior and inferior versions of the same body.[3] However, the religious metaphor of 'becoming male' addressed the fluidity of this concept; the

[1] 'I passud thoru a garden grene', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. by Karen Saupe (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 28:41-48.

[2] Vern L. Bullough translation, quoted in 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Claire A. Lees, Thelma S. Fenster and Jo Ann McNamara (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) pp. 31-46 (p. 32), from St. Jerome, 'Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephasios', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 26 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1884), bk. 16, col. 56. St. Jerome's commentary was dependent on the work of Origen of Alexandria; the metaphor of a holy woman becoming manly through piety was therefore popular in biblical, monastic and theological literature from the third century onwards. See Kari Vogt, '"Becoming Male" A Gnostic, Early Christian and Islamic Metaphor', in *Women's Studies of the Christian and Islamic Traditions: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Foremothers*, ed. by Kari Elisabeth Børresen and Kari Vogt (Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), pp. 172-187; Ronald E. Heine, 'Recovering Origen's Commentary on Ephesians from Jerome' *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 51, 2 (2000), 478-514; Ronald E. Heine, *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St. Peter's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[3] Joan Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 171-177; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 220-221.

body existed on a sliding scale of moral and spiritual perfection with 'maleness' and 'femaleness' as attributes one could acquire.[4] Female saints were praised for transcending the weakness of their sex by becoming 'femina virilis' or a 'female man of God'.[5] Likewise, male saints related to female roles such as the mother or the bride to strip themselves of their masculine status and achieve a closer union to Christ's humanity.[6] Christ acted as the ultimate model of imitation for men and women. Yet, scholarship has often separated medieval devotion into binary categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' or assessed patterns as a 'lack' of gender. By looking at how the gendered body and holiness interreacted in late medieval hagiography, this study re-examines Christ as a singular model of imitation by arguing that an integral part of his representation has been overlooked: the flesh he shared with the Virgin Mary.

Studies on Gendered Devotion

Scholarship on religion has widely discussed the importance of a divine figure of imitation in gendered devotion. The analysis of religion through a feminist theory lens has been heavily reliant upon binary definitions of gender since the 1960s, when feminist language studies foregrounded gender as a category of analysis that could understand the oppression and erasure of women by the generic term 'man'.[7] The study of religion was equated as a 'human signing system' that could reveal nuances and complexities of gender as produced in society, authorised through the use of symbols in language, and biologically enacted through ritual.[8] Academics such as Diane Bell and Susan Starr Sered conducted cross-cultural examinations of women and their religious orientations, asking how their symbolic discourses and interests

[4] Vogt, 'Becoming Male', p. 218.
[5] Jane Tibbetts Schulenberg, 'Hagiography', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Margaret Schaus (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 346-354 (p. 348). Palladius, the first Christian bishop of Ireland praised saintly women for being 'female men of God' and 'athletes of Christ'. See *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, trans. by Robert T. Meyer (Westminster: Newman Press, 1965).
[6] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 36.
[7] Darlene M. Juschka, 'Gender', in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. by John R. Hinnels, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 245-258 (pp. 245-6).
[8] Juschka, 'Gender', in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. by Hinnels, p. 249.

differed from men's.[9] Theorists such as Nancy Hartsock, Dorothy Smith, Patricia Hill-Collins, and Mary Daly understood instructional religion as a pillar supporting a patriarchal society, operating through patriarchal relations, with women subjugated to the background.[10] In her essay 'Divine Woman', Luce Irigaray reflected on the literary figures of Melusine and Chevalier au Cygne from the middle ages through to the early modern period to address subjectivity and the transmutational image of women.[11] Irigaray believed this stemmed from women's relationship with the divine. Whereas a man can exist as a consistent, homogenous subject as the image of God defines his gender, 'there is no woman God, no female trinity: mother, daughter, spirit'.[12] This lack of a female divine entity has left women's subjectivity

[9] Susan Starr Sered, *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 8-9; Diana Bell, *Daughters of the Dreaming* (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1983).

[10] This analysis is referred to as feminist standpoint theory, which suggests that one's perspectives and experiences are created through their social position. Standpoint theorists argue that people who lack authority and, therefore, occupy positions of low social and economic privilege, can use this position as a starting point of enquiry and challenge their marginalised position in society. For a short overview see Juschka, 'Gender', in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. by Hinnels, pp. 251-2. Also see Nancy Hartsock, *Feminist standpoint revisited and other essays* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Nancy Hartsock, 'The Feminist Standpoint: Developing Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism', in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, ed. by Sandra Harding and Merill B. Hintikka, rev. edn (New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, and Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004) pp. 283-310. Ebook; Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987); Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990); Patricia Hill Collins, 'Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought', in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, ed. by Sarah Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 103-126; Dorothy Smith, 'Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology', in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, pp. 21-34; Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, rev. edn (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*: *Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973). Daly argued that 'God the Father' was a reversal of the figure of the Goddess, who later was reduced to the 'Mother of God', as a way to subjugate women and foreground patriarchy. See Daly, *God the Father*, pp. 95-7.

[11] The texts Luce Irigaray consulted for this essay included Jean d'Arras Le livre de Mélusine (1478). See Jean d'Arras, *Melusine, or, The noble history of Lusignan*, ed. and trans. by Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012) for an edited and translated edition of the manuscript. For the comparable stories in the Andersen and Grimm collections of fairy tales see Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm Grimm, *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, ed. and trans. by Jack Zipes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). For a collection of Hans Christian Anderson fairy tales see, *Tales of Hans Christian Anderson*, trans. by Naomi Lewis (London: Walker, 2009); Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'Mélusine maternelle de défricheuse', *Annales Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 26 (1971), pp. 587-622; Christian Lacoutext, *Mélusine et le chevalier au cygnet* (Paris: Payot, 1982); Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. by George Eliot (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957).

[12] Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Woman', in *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 55-72 (p. 62).

fractured and constructed by a male discourse.[13] Without a divine entity shaped in their image, women cannot create their self-narratives and become conduits of the divine, acting as receivers of the spirit, in-between humanity and divinity.[14] Irigaray claimed a female god was needed which presented a fulfilled image of womanhood that did not diminish women to her archetypes but united the roles of mother, lover, and bride.[15] Irigaray's analysis was influenced by medieval gender constructions and devotion, which judged women as inferior to men yet placed them in intercessory roles between man and God.[16]

In a medieval context, gendered piety has been a central theme in scholarship since the late twentieth century. Whereas past work had centred around the lives of men, scholars such as Caroline Walker Bynum and Barbara Newman shifted the focus to medieval women's piety.[17] In her seminal study *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food*, Bynum examined saints' lives and mystics' writing to identify patterns in female piety. The defining difference Bynum recognised was that female lives mainly dealt with the 'struggles against the flesh', such as sexual and bodily temptations.[18] In the gendered dichotomy of language, male and female piety was separated into binary patterns: men held roles of authority compared to women's role of caregivers; men were strong and active, whereas women were weak and passive; men concerned themselves with matters of the spirit and inner spirituality, whereas women's stories centred around the flesh and the body.[19] Bynum argued that the

[13] Luce Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. by Alison Martin (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 68; Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 59-61.
[14] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 61, 63.
[15] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61. Irigaray claimed that women should be celebrated as a two-dimensional threshold that is always half open and in gestation. This description of woman united the roles of mother and lover in a way that exalted and did not demonise or diminish woman's position. I discuss this further in Chapters Two and Three.
[16] Irigaray's description of a female God plays upon medieval tropes of gender, discussed further in the section of the Introduction entitled 'Gender in the Middle Ages'.
[17] Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza argued that past scholarship was centred around the actions of the male elite. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 80-101.
[18] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 29.
[19] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 28.

symbolic actions of eating, fasting and feeding in female saint's lives and mysticism, were 'what the female symbolised: the fleshy, the nurturing, the suffering, the human'.[20] By using binary notions of gender, medieval piety was separated into clear feminine and masculine traits. In my terminology throughout this thesis, I have used these definitions of feminine spirituality as passive and somatic, compared to male spirituality as active and rational.[21]

These definitions have influenced how male and female devotion has been perceived and analysed. In *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, Bynum discussed in further detail how in saint's lives men adopted feminine symbols of devotion to connect to Christ's humanity. These images of gendered reversal saw man temporarily occupy the roles of mother, bride and virgin before being reintegrated into an ecclesiastical institution.[22] These definitions have also labelled men who practised asceticism, such as Henry Suso, or experienced bodily devotion, like St. Francis of Assisi's stigmata, as performing a type of feminine spirituality.[23] Therefore, male acts of *imitatio Christi* are often linked with the feminine, likely to contextualise man's subordinate position to Christ.

On the other end of this spectrum, male biographers often encouraged female saints to act 'virile' or 'manfully' in their piety.[24] However, scholarship has argued that in later medieval devotion, women did not have to 'become men' in their spirituality due to their union with Christ.[25] Bynum pointed out that virgin martyrs were not merely the representatives of Christ, but the body of Christ itself.[26] The body of Christ that bled and birthed the Church functioned

[20] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 289.
[21] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 105. Bynum argued that men and women were separated into contrasting values, 'intellect/body, active/passive, rational/irrational, reason/emotion, self-control/lust, judgement/mercy, order/disorder' See Caroline Walker Bynum, '"...And Woman His Humanity:" Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of Later Middle', in *Gender Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*, ed. by Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell and Paula Richman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), pp. 257-88 (p. 257).
[22] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 36.
[23] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 105.
[24] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 105.
[25] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 28.
[26] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 210.

the same as the female body and offered women an important figure of imitation.[27] In her study on late medieval religious literature, Barbara Newman examined the two models of femininity available to women through faith: the *femina virilis* and the WomanChrist, who practiced a form of *imitatio Christi* that exalted and united one with the feminine spirit.[28]. These models combined honorary male status with a highly gendered exemplary of female virginity embodied through the Virgin Mary. These ideals positioned women between an angelic, impossible, ideal and being considered 'dangerously female', for women 'forgot their sex at their peril.'[29] It is also important to note that these positions were typically only assigned to an elite group of women.[30] Despite this borrowing of female images and language to aid union between man, woman, and God, the exclusion of the feminine from the Trinity, women's condemnation from public practices such as preaching, and from holding officiated positions in the Church, posed a barrier for women's connection to God.[31] Women were seen as inspired vessels and intercessors, as opposed to a man's role as priest, preacher, and leader.[32]

Despite men's positions of superiority, when scholarship compared male religious to secular definitions of medieval masculinity, they were often positioned in a liminal position as occupying a 'third gender' between masculinity and femininity.[33] Bynum demonstrated how

[27] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 289.
[28] Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 1-18, p. 23. Newman points out that the image of the 'virago' or 'virile woman' did not undermine the belief in female inferiority, arguably as its basis is entrenched in a language in which women will always be inferior to man. Also see Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 205; Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge, *The Power of a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), p. 384.
[29] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 5.
[30] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 5. This elite group of women was usually consecrated wealthy virgins and widows.
[31] Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 38.
[32] Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, p. 38; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 23.
[33] I discuss how religious and secular masculinity intersect in Chapter One, particularly the sections 'Reformation, Sacrifice, and the Male Virgin' and 'Soldiers of Christ'. For an overview see Jo Ann McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System 1050-1140', in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. by Lees, Fenster and McNamara, pp. 3-30; R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, 6th edn. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998). Also see the essay collections: *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray (New York; London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1999); *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity: Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed.

the writings of twelfth-century Cistercian monks adopted feminine metaphors to describe the abbot's role in a nurturing, maternal manner.[34] R. N. Swanson argued that the medieval clergy attempted to live as 'angels'.[35] Likewise, chaste virginity has been considered a genderless state separate from maleness and femaleness.[36] Scholars such as Ruth Kazo Karras, Robert Mills and Jacqueline Murray have argued for both masculinity and femininity to be understood not as monolithic but multiple co-existing identities.[37] Despite this shift in scholarship, medieval devotional is often dictated by binaries or the state of being genderless, especially in physical acts of imitation of Christ.

In conforming to a binary discourse, the feminine takes centre stage as it is compared to the 'male standard'. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler argued that 'the institution of a compulsory and naturalised heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from the feminine term'.[38] Likewise, Sered refuted previous feminist anthropological discourse that correlated religion as the ideological foundation and justification for patriarchy. Sered concluded, 'men/women's religiosity are more alike than unalike – as male and female are not opposite in sex, so women's and men's religions are not opposite in religion'.[39] In a medieval context, Newman has challenged masculinity as the focal point of medieval religion. *God and*

by Jennifer D. Thibodeaux (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[34] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 110-160; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Jesus As Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 70, 3/4 (1977), pp. 257-284 (p. 258).

[35] R. N. Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. M. Hadley (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), pp. 160-177 (pp. 160-1, 170-1).

[36] Samantha J. E. Riches, 'St. George as a male virgin martyr', in *Gender and Holiness. Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 65-85 (p. 71).

[37] Jacqueline Murray, 'Introduction', in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities*, ed. by Murray, pp. xi-xx (p. xi).

[38] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 3rd edn (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), p. 30.

[39] Sered, *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister*, pp. 8-9.

the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages engaged with goddesses from a range of medieval prose, literary poetry, revelations of holy women and theological writing. Whereas medieval goddesses have typically been dismissed as ideological constructs, allegories, and 'an embarrassment to medievalists', Newman demanded a more astute reading of these female divine entities.[40] Newman argued that by crossing the boundaries of genre, language, fantasy and intellect, goddesses added 'an irreducible fourth dimension to the spiritual universe [..] [as] ravishing objects of identification and desire, [that] substantially transformed and deepened Christendom's concept of God'.[41] Newman's approach refuted the notion that medieval religion was based on the masculinity of God and demonstrated how divinity was envisioned through multiple bodies. This idea of unity is explored in further detail here, by examining how the cultural constructs of gender influenced the medieval perception of God and pathways towards piety. To deal with this question, I must consider the nuances of medieval gender.

Gender in the Middle Ages

Medieval gender is best understood as a sliding scale upon the body, in which one could adopt attributes of femininity and masculinity. The humoral theory of Hippocratic and Galenic medicine underpinned medicinal discourse in the middle ages. There were three areas of difference between the sexes: complexion, temperament and physique.[42] Most authors agreed that complexion, and particularly heat, was the main difference between men and women that influenced their nature and figure. It was believed that the body consisted of four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. One's complexion was created through the balance of the qualities these humors represented. For example, blood is found in the veins and arteries,

[40] Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, p. 1.
[41] Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, pp. 2-3.
[42] The physician Jacopo of Forli (c. 1364-1414) highlighted these three areas of difference. Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 170.

is moist and warm, and responsible for making the spirit wilder, whereas black bile resided in the spleen, was thought of as cold and dry, and made the spirit firmer. The four qualities that were considered the foundational elements of the body were hot, cold, moist, and dry. Women were associated with the cold and moist humor phlegm, which lead to a submissive disposition; men related to the hot and dry humor choler (yellow bile), which made them dominant and active.[43]

The belief that women were physically weaker with a softer, more passive temperament was directly related to their body's inability to produce heat.[44] Man's ability to produce heat throughout their lives resulted in them attaining a higher level of completion: as men retained their physical heat into adulthood, they were able to refine their nutritive superfluities through a generative process that created body hair.[45] During puberty, women began to lose the vital heat of childhood, which left them unable to refine their excess residues. Menstruation was the body's response, to cleanse and purge these harmful toxins.[46] Women's relatively hairless and cold physiques meant that they were incomplete and closely resembled children.[47] These perceived differences reinforced the limited economic and social rights of women.[48]

[43] Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 1-24 (pp. 12-17); Patricia Skinner, 'Marking the Face, Curing the Soul? Reading the Disfigurement of Women in the Later Middle Ages', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 181-202 (pp. 184-5); Plinio Prioreschi, *Medieval Medicine* (Omaha: Horatius Press, 2003), p. 213; Elspeth Whitney, *Medieval Science and Technology* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 96.
[44] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 172.
[45] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 182-3.
[46] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 170-1, p. 175; Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 24. Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' *de Secretis Mulierum* also addresses the loss of childhood heat as the cause for menstruation. In Magnus's view this suggests women are not suited for learning as "the coarseness of their spirits stop up and deaden the brain". Magnus' also states sexual intercourse is more beneficial for women as it tempers their frigid natures. See Psuedo-Albertus Magnus, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' de Secretis Mulierum with commentarie*s, trans. by Helen-Rodnite Lemay (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 70.
[47] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 182.
[48] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 182.

Essentially, men and women were the default and secondary versions of the same organism: perfect as opposed to imperfect; internal as opposed to external.[49] For example, men and women were believed to share the same sex organs with the uterus characterised as an 'inverted penis'; both endured exudings (universally referred to as bleedings), with menstrual blood understood as inferior semen. Fear around mutability followed both sexes, which resulted in strict sexual conduct to prevent male pregnancies.[50] Reproduction was also centred around the theory of the two seeds: active and passive. There are two primary schools of thought behind this theory stemming from Greek physiology. Galen advocated that both men and women produced generative seeds, but the female seed had less 'informing' power than the male. The Hippocratic view was similar but did not correlate the gender of the seed with the sex of the person from which it came, but stated that the most potent seed, wherever it originated, would be defined as more 'masculine'. Alternatively, the Aristotelian viewpoint was that woman possessed no seed and only provided the necessary material to nourish the foetus.[51] It was a widely accepted view that the embryo absorbed and was nourished through its mother's menstrual blood, which then became breast milk after birth.[52] These reproductive theories denoted women's sexuality as open and receptive in comparison to man's active role.[53]

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[49] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 171-177; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 220-221.

[50] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 220-221; Carla Rice, *Becoming Women*: *The Embodied Self in Image Culture* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 37; Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, p. 173.

[51] Dyan Elliot, 'Gender and the Christian Traditions', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Judith M. Bennet and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 19-100 (pp. 27-28); Kathleen Gallagher Elkins, *Mary, Mother of Martyrs: How Motherhood Became Self-Sacrifice in Early Christianity* (FSR Books: Indianapolis, IN, 2018) pp. xxiii-xxiv; Newman, *God and the Goddesses*; Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of The Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1990) pp. 38-52.

[52] Breast milk was believed to be menstruation blood that goes through a transmutation process of purification. See Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Female body and Religious Practice in Later Middle Ages', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, Nadia Tazi, 3 vols (New York: Zone, 1989) p. 182; Whitney, *Medieval Science and Technology*, p. 97.

[53] Joyce E. Salisbury, 'Gendered Sexuality', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York and London: Palgrave, 1996), pp. 81-102 (p. 87).

The notion of women's bodies as naturally porous or 'open' was prevalent, stemming from early Christian writing. I use the terminology of the opened and enclosed woman throughout this thesis to articulate the paradoxical perception of the female body. The functions of the female body, such as menstruation, childbirth, and sexual penetration, envisioned it as an opened, leaking vessel. The word *vas*, which means jar or vessel, frequently occurred in medieval texts as a synonym for woman. The notion of woman as an open vessel coincided with her innate passive nature; as she lacked the active male principle, she was an empty void. However, her receptiveness made her more susceptible to sin and corruption. As a sexual metaphor, it alluded to her insatiable appetite for the 'pleasures of the flesh' as, during sexual intercourse, she would draw the male seed towards her.[54] Menstruation was not only seen as a sign of female imperfection but a theological stain upon marking Eve's disobedience. Whereas Adam's punishment after the Fall was to labour for his food, Eve was cursed with painful childbearing.[55] The 'women as open' metaphor was potent in culturally aligning women with carnality and the flesh. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430AD) considered the female body the 'fissure of the flesh', which placed women in a liminal position between the flesh and the soul (or human and divine will).[56] As an opened, corruptible body the ideal state of womanhood was to be enclosed: their physical borders must be guarded and protected, which increased the importance of virginity for women.

The modern understanding of gender defines it as a social construct, separate from biological sex.[57] In medieval thought, gender constructs were intertwined in medical discourse. Cultural expectations, principles, and characteristics of men and women were written upon the body and considered innate to their biology.[58] Man's strength and activity came from his name

[54] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 178-9.
[55] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 174-5.
[56] Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 21.
[57] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 8.
[58] Salisbury, 'Gendered Sexuality', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Bullough and Brundage, p. 81.

vir, which was derived from *vis*, meaning power or force.[59] Semen was considered the purest, most refined form of blood and originated in the brain, thus connecting man with reason and a higher degree of completeness.[60] In contrast, women derived their name *mulier* from *mollities*, meaning softness.[61] The naturally open and porous female body contributed to the cultural association between women and the flesh, carnality, and contamination.[62] In comparison, men were equated with rationality, wisdom, and knowledge.[63] The stark binarism of medieval gender constructs defined what behaviours were considered masculine and feminine. However, they were not necessarily fixed to your sexed body. Instead, the body was envisioned as a sliding scale where effeminacy existed on the lower end and virility at the higher end.[64]

Humoral theory, which divided men from women by their physical heat and disposition, was one of the leading concepts for this arbitrary division. Men with a 'colder' temperament (and therefore existed further down the gendered scale) were less virile. In a secular sense of masculinity, which advocated sexual prowess, a lack of heat would be considered undesirable. However, in a devotional context, this would have been a positive attribute.[65] Men with this temperament had a lower libido and greater control over their sexual impulses.[66] On the opposite end of this scale was the 'Femina virilis' or 'female man of God'.[67] The image of the virago exemplified the Christian ideal for women – a man-like woman with heroic and

[59] Salisbury, 'Gendered Sexuality', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Bullough and Brundage, p. 86; Danielle Jacquart, Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p. 48.
[60] Salisbury, 'Gendered Sexuality', p. 89.
[61] Salisbury, 'Gendered Sexuality', p. 86; Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, p. 14; Vern L. Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 199), p. 48.
[62] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 252; Scott Kugle, *Mysticism, Corporeality & Sacred Power in Islam* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) pp. 93-98.
[63] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 282. Also see the essay collection *Fleshly Things and Spiritual Matters: Studies on the Medieval Body in Honour of Margaret Bridges*, ed. by Nicole Nyffenegger and Katrin Rupp (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).
[64] Jo Ann McNamara, 'Virile Women', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 820-21.
[65] I discuss the lack of heat/sexual virility as a positive or desirable attribute for pious men in Chapter One, 'Reformation, Sacrifice, and the Male Virgin'.
[66] McNamara, 'Virile Women', pp. 820-21.
[67] Schulenberg, 'Hagiography', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, p. 348.

exemplary qualities.[68] This trope has been evident in the hagiographies of female saints since the third century. On the night before her martyrdom, Saint Perpetua had a vision where she transformed into a man who could overcome her adversaries.[69] The fourth century saw the emergence of the transvestite saints, a group of female saints who endured spiritual and physical hardship disguised as men.[70] However, the term was not to be taken literally. The female reader was encouraged to take on 'the virile soul or rational mind […] in pursuing a 'virile' spirituality whereby she could rise above her sex'.[71]

As previously mentioned, in *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios* Jerome advocated that women refute their sex, but within limitations. He warned Eustochium, St. Paula's daughter, to be wary of women who 'change their garb and assume the mien of men, being ashamed of being what they were born to be – women. They cut off their hair and are not ashamed to look like eunuchs'.[72] Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* and Valerie R. Hotchkiss's *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe* addressed female cross-dressing, its implications, and reception. Whereas male cross-dressing was associated with a loss of status and sexual perversion, female cross-dressing was regarded as an attempt to remove the self from the realm of sexual desire.[73] In the lives of the transvestite saints, the saints' decision to don male clothing and seek sanctuary in a monastery occurred at

[68] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 23.
[69] Joyce E Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 108; Margaret Cotter-Lynch, *Saint Perpetua across the Middle Ages: Mother, Gladiator, Saint* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 101.
[70] McNamara, 'Virile Women', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 820-21. Scholarship has referred to these group of saints using the term 'transvestite'; however, this term is outdated. I discuss this in further detail in the section 'Methodology: The Construction of the Saint's Flesh' and in Chapter Four.
[71] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 23.
[72] 'St. Jerome, Letter 22: to Eustochium', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. by W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W. G. Martley, vol. 6 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893). Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Letters of St. Jerome: Letter 22: To Eustochium', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> [accessed 6 January 2019] (para. 27).
[73] Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York: Garland, 1996).

a cross-road in their lives. St. Pelagia wished to renounce her past life as a prostitute and remove all signifiers of her female, sexed body. St. Eugenia turned to male dress to escape an arranged marriage and preserve her chastity.[74] Likewise, St. Paula, a noble Roman widow, was described as possessing 'manly qualities'.[75] Paula did not don male dress, but her piety led her to change her path after her husband's death. She left her children, pledged chastity, and resided within a fellowship of virgins where she was described as the humblest in dress, speech, and action. Of her previous duty, Paula exclaimed, "I haue pleased man and the world I desire now to please Ihesu Crist".[76]

As these examples show, virility was viewed as a moral and virtuous quality that could be obtained by observing a strict code of conduct. 'Becoming male' was, therefore, embedded in language and translated to becoming virginal, spiritual, and knowledgeable of God. However, women still had to maintain readable womanhood.[77] A woman's worth was still intrinsically linked to her marital and sexual status. In the thirteenth-century sermon *Hali Meiðhad* (c. 1210-1220), virginity is praised over marriage. In the text, virgins reside in a tall tower and widows and married women are situated underneath.[78] The text reads:

> Ant bitacneth this tur the hehnesse of meithhad, the bihald, as of heh, alle widewen under hire ant weddede bathe. For theos, ase flesches threalles, beoth i worldes theowdom ant wunieth lahe on eorthe, ant meiden stont, thurh heh lif, i the tur of Jerusalem. Nawt of lah on eorthe, ah of the hehe in Heovene, the is bitacnet thurh this, of thet Syon ha bihalt al the worlt under hire, ant thurh englene liflade ant heovenlich thet ha lead, thah ha licomliche wunie upon eorthe, ha is as i Syon — the hehe tur of Heovene — freo over alle from worldliche weanen. Ah Babilones folc (thet ich ear nempnede), the deofles here of Helle, thet beoth flesches lustes ant feondes eggunge, weorrith ant warpeth eaver | towart tis tur forte keasten hit adun ant drahen hire into theowdom.

[74] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, ed. by Richard Hamer, 3 vols, EETS, Original Series nos. 327, 328, 339 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 2006), pp. 744-747; 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 666-670.
[75] Tertullian, 'Chapter XLI – Holy Women, in Palladius, *The Lausiac History* (1918) pp. 35-190. English Translation', *The Tertullian Project* (2003) <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/palladius_lausiac_02_text.htm#C41> [accessed 6 January 2019] (para. 1-2 of 3).
[76] 'St. Paula' *Gilte Legende*, pp. 134-141 (p. 137, II. 108-109).
[77] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 178.
[78] 'Hali Meithhad', *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Emily Rebekah Huber and Elizabeth Robertston (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2016), 2:2.

> [And this tower betokens the high rank of maidenhood, which beholds, as from on high, both all widows and the wedded underneath her. For these, as thralls of the flesh, are in the world's bondage and dwell low on the earth, and a maiden stands, through the lofty life, in the tower of Jerusalem. Not from low of earth, but from the height of Heaven, which is signified through this, from that Sion she beholds all the world under her, and through the angelic and heavenly life that she leads, although she dwells bodily upon the earth, she is as if in Syon — the high tower of Heaven — completely free from the world's miseries. But Babylon's folk (which I mentioned earlier), the devil's army of Hell, which are the lusts of the flesh and the egging on of the fiends, make war and always assail this tower to cast it down and drag her into slavery].[79]

The image of the virgins residing in a high tower, looking down at women who are married or widowed, demonstrates the high status attached to virginity and, consequently, maidenhood. The passage associated virginity with heavenly images, positioning it in opposition to the flesh. Widowed and married women are linked with the earth, bondage and slavery, as a reminder of what was at stake. Maidenhood was also a time of turmoil where the 'thralls of the flesh' and the 'devil's army' attempted to assail the tower. As young girls were expected to be chaste, beautiful, modest and incorruptible, maidenhood was the ideal age of womanhood in which to celebrate in a devotional context.[80] Kim Phillips has concluded that 'a maiden possessed all the attractive qualities of femininity but was free of the faults.'[81] This model of identification was presented in the depiction of the Virgin Mary as a chaste, beautiful, young girl in her maidenhood and with Christ's body as the embodiment of virginal perfection, being both born from a virgin and retaining his chastity.[82] The virgin body was believed to hold the same essence as Christ's body: integrity, wholeness, and chastity were principal qualities of Christian virility.[83] The 'becoming male' narrative of spirituality virility was, therefore, intrinsically linked to feminine ideals of physical perfection that centred on virginity and bodily enclosure.

[79] 'Hali Meithhad', 2:3-5. Translation by Huber and Robertston.
[80] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 7.
[81] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, pp. 6-7.
[82] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 51.
[83] Sarah Salih uses the Latin term 'consubstantiality', which is an ideology in Christian theology referring to the common properties or shared essence of the trinity. See Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), p. 243; T. Pearman, *Women and Disability in Medieval Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

These ideals were projected and highlighted in Christ and the Virgin Mary, which made them exemplary models, both spirituality and physically, to imitate.

Christ and Mary as Exemplars

In 431 the Council of Ephesus proclaimed Mary '*Theotokos'*, later translated into Latin as *Dei Genitrix* or *Mater Dei* [Mother of God].[84] Hilda Graef translated this to mean 'she who gives birth to God'.[85] The council's declaration led to serious debates about the nature of Christ. Many believed that to announce Mary as the 'Mother of God' was also to declare that Christ had a dual nature: both human and divine.[86] In the fifth century, the Council of Chalcedon officially established Christ as both divine and human within one body, venerated and worshipped as both God and man.[87] These two natures did not exist in division or separation but belonged to Christ in union. Christ was understood as the

> One and same Christ, Son, Lord only begotten, made known in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation, the difference of the natures never abolished because of the union but the property of each nature being preserved in and in harmony with one Person and one hypostasis— not parted or divided into two Persons, but one and the same Son.[88]

[84] Conrad Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother: Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth Century West', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, 400-1400, ed. by Lesley Smith and Conrad Leyser (London: Routledge, 2011) pp. 21-41 (pp. 38-9); Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington: The Catholic University of American Press, 2001), pp. 116-8; *Vittoria Colonna, Chiara Matrani, Luzrezia Marinella. Who is Mary? Three Early Modern Women on the idea of the Virgin Mary*, ed. and trans. by Susan Haskins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) p. 12; Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 11, p. 43.

[85] Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 46.

[86] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', pp. 38-9.

[87] *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. and trans. by Richard Price, Michael Gaddis, 3 vols (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 62.

[88] Quotation from the Creed of the Council of Chalcedon translated by H. Dezinger. See H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, ed. by R. Fastiggi. and A. Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012). Quoted from Thomas G. Weinandy, 'The Doctrinal Significance of the Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon', *in The Oxford Handbook of Christology* ed. by Francesca Aran Murphy and Troy A. Stefano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 549-567 (p. 560).

Christ's two natures were referred to as the 'hypostatic union'. 'Hypostasis', which translates as 'foundation' from the Greek, defined an entity with multiple natures that remains unified. His deity and humanity are always present; they are not transfused or converged into one, but to be understood as equal. As George Hunsinger explained, 'when the New Testament depicts Jesus in his divine power, status, and authority, it presupposes his humanity; and when it depicts him in his human finitude, weakness, and mortality, it presupposes his deity'.[89] This definition of Christ's nature exists in Christian doctrine to this day, but readings of the Virgin Mary as an extension or integral part of this union have been largely dismissed or overlooked.

As the virgin mother of Christ, Mary stood as the symbol of bodily purity. Her womb was considered especially holy as the focal point for the union between humanity and divinity.[90] As her virginity and intercessory role as a mother is so central to her position, Mary as a powerful or divine being in her own right is a contested topic.[91] Alexandra Cuffel noted that Mary's primary function was to displace the unpalatable aspects of humanity from Christ's body onto her own.[92] Even in denying her sexuality and exalting her purity, Mary was still a female associated with the flesh – no matter how much symbolism has decoded and altered the meanings. Kate Koppelman has challenged the reading of Mary as a passive vessel, arguing that the paradoxical language in which she was described was linked to her significance as a sublime symbol. Koppleman analysed Middle English miracle lyrics of the Virgin Mary that adopted the language of courtly love to depict her intercessory role. Using Gilles Deleuxe's and Felix Guattari's concept of transcoding, which examined how artifacts or language became remade when transported from their 'natural' location, Koppelman presented how the courtly

[89] George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Bath* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), p. 113.
[90] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 1; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 23.
[91] I discuss Mary's role in medieval Christianity in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three.
[92] Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 123-24.

love lexicon produced an unstable image of Mary.[93] This mutable representation of the Virgin Mary in late medieval England, Koppelman believed, is related to her status as a created signifier: she became the 'inhuman partner' or courtly lady.[94] Although Koppelman's paper focused on the lexicon of chivalry, devotional language also challenged the understanding of the Virgin as a vessel of human passivity.[95]

High praise of the Virgin's actions was not uncommon throughout the middle ages. Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1153) wrote, 'just imagine! Double Marvel! God does what a woman says – unheard of humility. A woman outranks God – unparalleled sublimity'.[96] Bernardino of Siena (c. 1380-1444) asserted that 'Mary had done more for God than God could do for himself'.[97] Helen Phillips has described the lexicon used to praise Mary as polysemous, unstable and hyperbolic.[98] Koppelman stated that there is only one way to describe Mary: through paradox.[99] Theresa Reed has also examined the idiosyncratic nature of the Virgin Mary, which she claimed is culturally constructed but not in opposition to dominant theological ideologies.[100] It is this deeper theological analysis that my thesis investigates further by highlighting how Mary's idiosyncratic nature is like Christ's in its representation. For by granting the Virgin Mary supernatural salvific powers her humanity is displaced, whilst paradoxically being a key component. If she is to be understood as solely human, her role as

[93] Kate Koppelman, 'Becoming her Man: Transcoding in Medieval Marian Literature', *Exemplaria*, 22. 3 (2010), 200-222; Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
[94] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Dennis Porter. (New York: Norton, 1992), pp. 18, 112, 150.
[95] Koppelman, *Becoming Her Man*, pp. 201, 212.
[96] Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Four Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mother', in *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by Marie-Bernard Saïd and Grace Perigo (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1979), pp. 11. This passage is from Homily I, which is titled *In Praise of the Virgin Mother*.
[97] San Bernardino of Siena, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by P. M. Perantoni, 5 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1950), 2:375. Cited and translated in Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 182.
[98] Helen Phillips, '"Almighty and Al Merciable Queene": Marian Titles and Marian Lyrics', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour Felicity Riddy*. ed. by J. Wogan-Browne, R. Voaden, A. Diamond, A. M. Hutchinson, C. Meale and L. Johnson (Belgium: Brepols, 2000), pp. 83-99 (p. 84).
[99] Koppelman, 'Becoming Her Man: Transcoding in Medieval Marian Literature', pp. 204-206, 209, 217, 219.
[100] Teresa P. Reed, *Shadows of Mary: Reading the Virgin Mary in Medieval Texts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 5.

the Mother of God and the Queen of heaven complicates matters, as does being the intercessor between Christ and sinners, which created 'an ambivalent image of divine grace' around her.[101] Whereas the perception of women can appear static and singular compared to men as they are confined to one model of femininity: virgin, mother, or queen, Mary occupies all these categories. As Sarah Kay argued, the Virgin is a contradictory figure that embodies a clash of contradictions and challenges reason.[102] Like Christ, she is an impossible multitude of natures that exist in union within one body, for she is the foundational root of Christ's humanity.[103]

As the mother of Christ, the Virgin Mary holds an important place in understanding the feminised portrayal of Christ's flesh. In her end prayer, St. Katherine of Alexandria stated: 'for Jhesu, love, my Spouse Gay, that born was of a maydyn chast'.[104] In matrilineal principles, blood was the connecting force between mother and child as it was the medium of exchange between mother and foetus. In medieval theories of physiology, the maternal uterine blood formed the foetus, which, once given life through the seed of the father or the 'active' seed, was fed by the blood of the womb and breasts.[105] Bynum stated, 'the blood from which the individual is constituted is gendered female; the body is the mother's blood'.[106] Due to Christ's virgin birth, the body of Christ and the Virgin Mary was exclusively the same, thus essentially female.[107] This theory was included in sermons speaking about Christ being formed 'from the very pure blood of blessed Mary' [*ex purissimis sanguinibus beate Marie*].[108] Like the tortured, virginal bodies of virgin martyrs and the suffering, life-giving bodies of mother saints, Christ's

[101] Koppelman, 'Becoming Her Man: Transcoding in Medieval Marian Literature', p. 202.
[102] Sarah Kay, *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 179.
[103] Emma Solberg discusses the Virgin Mary's multiple and paradoxical characterisation in Emma Maggie Solberg, *Virgin Whore* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2018).
[104]'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Sherry L. Reames, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2003), II. 665-66.
[105] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 158.
[106] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 158.
[107] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 217.
[108] Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 50.

body too shared these same female experiences.[109] Like menstrual blood and breast milk, the blood of Christ shed during circumcision and crucifixion was viewed as cleansing and nourishing.[110] Christ's 'cleansing blood' decreed humans clean from sin due to his suffering and death on the cross and also served as an image of unification with Christ.[111] Christ's blood and side-wound became sites of devotion and ways to access the divine on a higher spiritual level.

The iconography of Christ's wounds holds stark vulvic and vaginal qualities in their shape and representation of blood, which is free-flowing and alive.[112] The illustrations either stand alone or as a dissected representation of Christ's crucifixion.[113] David Areford argued that the wound represented a form of visual synecdoche, where it stands in for Christ's body and signified the passion in its entirety.[114] The wound held a dual purpose; it represented Christ's sorrows, such as through the *Arma Christi,* and was an object of intense affective response. Religious texts produced for nuns and the laity encouraged tasting, touching, sucking, kissing, and entering into Christ's wound as a safe refuge.[115]

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[109] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 158.
[110] Sarah Alison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), p. 113.
[111] Amy Hollywood, '"That Glorious slit": Irigaray and the medieval devotion to Christ's side wound', in *Luce Irigaray and Premodern Culture: Thresholds of History*, ed. by Elizabeth D. Harvey and Theresa Krier (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 105-126 (pp. 106-7).
[112] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 159. Scholars such as Karma Lochrie and Amy Hollywood have read the feminisation of Christ's flesh as the metaphorization of the wound of Christ as a maternal vagina, birthing the church, and a nursing breast, nourishing its congregation. I discuss this further in Chapter Two, 'Devotion to the Shared Flesh'. Also see Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 199-200; Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) pp. 164-90; Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 75-88; Karma Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by K. Lochrie, P. McCracken and J. A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) pp. 180-200 (p. 190); Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Hollywood, '"That Glorious slit"', pp. 105-126.
[113] For examples of illustrations see *Man of Sorrows and Wound*, c.1375, manuscript illumination, M. 90, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, fol. 130^{r}; *Psalter of Bonne Luxembourgh*, MS 69.86, Cloisters Museum, New York, fol. 331^{r}; *The Wounds of Christ with the Symbols of the Passion*, c. 1490, woodcut, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
[114] David S. Areford, 'The Passion Measured: A Late-medieval Diagram of the Body of Christ', in *The Body Broken: Passion Devotion in Late-medieval Culture*, ed. by A. A. MacDonald, H. N. B. Ridderbos and R. M. Schlusemann (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998), pp. 211-238 (pp. 220).
[115] Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', pp. 190-1; Hollywood, '"That Glorious slit"', p. 104.

Imitation of Christ was, therefore, centred around the body. One identified with Christ through his suffering and human nature. The ultimate model of Christ's suffering was his mother, the Virgin Mary. As the perfect imitator of her son, Mary offered a model that could be imitated by Christians wishing to experience Christ's pain. Mary stood as the gateway through which other might access Christ's humanity, but also as the foundation of Christ's humanity itself, for it is the flesh that both Mary and Christ bore than allowed their shared experience of suffering. Rachel Fulton has suggested that Mary's suffering with Christ was so great it made her Christ-like.[116] Mary's pain at Christ's crucifixion was considered the first stigmata: what Christ bore physically, she bore internally.[117] Bynum has argued that Mary's sorrow was doubled due to the medieval association of women with suffering and weakness.[118]

Medieval thought innately connected women with the body and the flesh; therefore, imitation of Christ's body and suffering has been considered a feminine form of spirituality. Scholarship has often associated men's somatic or emotive piety as a form of transformation: men adopted female motifs to transform 'divine' men of rationality to humble, weak, and spiritual 'women' stripped of status and power.[119] In the *vita* of St. Francis of Assisi, Francis relinquished his inheritance and position as the son of a wealthy merchant by taking on the role of caregiver to the sick.[120] Likewise, when Richard Rolle rejected his previous life, he asked his sister to meet him in the woods with two pieces of her clothing, which he fashioned into hermit robes.[121]

[116] Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 107.
[117] Carolyn Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p 178.
[118] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 95-6; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast,* pp. 264-65.
[119] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast,* pp. 25-35, 287.
[120] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35; Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of St. Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 187.
[121] *The Officium and Miracula of Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. by Reginald Maxwell Woolley (New York: Macmillan, 1919), p. 24; Christopher M. Roman, *Queering Richard Rolle: Mystical Theology and the Hermit in Fourteenth-Century England*, The New Middle Ages (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 1-2.

In examining this motif of 'gender reversal' in hagiography, this dissertation addresses the nuances within this theme, which is not as simple as previous scholarship has claimed. For although St. Francis was often called 'mother' by his friars, the process of *Imitatio Christi* and becoming an 'alter Christ' was also important to him.[122] Likewise, in the 'Life of St. Alban', there is a strong emphasis that he must be both meek and bold: 'a lamb in chaumbre, in batail a leon'.[123] As Derek Neal pointed out, religious masculinity and status were embedded in being biologically male.[124] Taking on attributes of the opposite gender typically adhered to the interior, not exterior qualities, such as clothing. Deuteronomy 22:5 condemned the adoption of male dress: 'the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination under the Lord thy God'.[125] Female cross-dressing was increasingly associated with witchcraft and heresy in the late middle ages, and Joan of Arc's prosecution and subsequent death was a direct result of her adopting male clothing.[126] As Newman concluded, the idealised image of the 'virago', or 'virile woman' was still viewed as a woman who occupied female roles such as wife, bride, or mother.[127] The transvestite saints who don male clothing to escape their social roles still become surrogate mothers and brides of Christ in death. In hagiographies when the saint assumes the opposite sex's traits, it is not at the expense of their gender; femininity and masculinity do not override each other but are always present.

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[122] Catherine M. Mooney, 'Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Mariae? Clare of Assisi and her Interpreters', in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, The Middle Age Series, ed. by Catherine M. Mooney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 52-3.
[123] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. by J. E. Van Der Westhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1974) p. 104, II. 526-530.
[124] Derek Neal, 'What Can Historians Do With Clerical Masculinity', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, pp. 16-38 (p. 16).
[125] Deuteronomy 22:5: A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.
[126] Erika E. Hess, *Literary Hybrids: Indeterminacy in Medieval & Modern French Narrative* (Oxfordshire: Taylor and Francis, 2003), p 43; Kathleen Blumreich, 'Lesbian desire in the Old French Roman de Silence', *Arthuriana*, 7, 2 (1997), 47-62 (p. 58); Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender*, p. 61; Susan Crane, *Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 73-78.
[127] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 31.

Whereas previous scholarship has sought a binary way to describe men and women's pathways towards holiness, my work explores the idea of unity. By asking whether masculine and feminine traits can exist in union within the body, I move away from reading gendered piety as genderless or androgynous. For pathways to Christ must be universal and available to both sexes. To address this question, I believe an integral part of unification and representation has been overlooked: that of the shared flesh and humanity between Christ and the Virgin Mary. Whereas their interdependence on each other as co-redeemers has been explored in iconography and literary analysis, I argue that Mary and Christ's shared flesh should be analysed as a single site of identification.[128]

Christ and Mary's flesh as a shared site of imitation was a prominent theme in alchemical texts during the fifteenth century. These texts figuratively paralleled the nature of the philosophers' stone, which consisted of a multitude of incompatible qualities, and the unity between Christ and Mary as 'the ultimate hermaphrodite'.[129] Leah De Vun analysed this joint image of Mary and Christ in the German alchemical text 'The Book of the Holy Trinity' (c. 1410-1419). The text claimed that Christ contained the Virgin Mary within him:

> One can never see the mother of God without also seeing that God eternally hides and intermingles [his mother] within him. God was and is eternally his own mother and his own father, human and divine, his divinity and his humanity intermingled within. And he depends on that which he wishes to be hidden most of all within himself, the divine and the human, the feminine and the masculine.[130]

[128] Catherine Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008); 'The Virgin Mary and Christocentric Devotion', in Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 60-97.
[129] Leah DeVun, 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 69, 2, (2008), 193-218 (p. 195).
[130] Anonymous, 'Livre de la tre`s sainte trinite´, New Haven, Conneticut, Beinecke Library, Yale University, Mellon MS 74, fol. 25r-v; quoted and translated by Devun, 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite', p. 208.

The image of the male and female principle existing in unity within one body demonstrates the fluid notion of medieval gender, embodied in the shared flesh of Christ and Mary.[131] As Christ inhabited the female flesh passed down to him from Mary, Christ's flesh amplified a universally gendered mode of imitation and access to Christianity. To analyse these points further, I turn to hagiography, which as source material offers important insights into how theological perceptions evolved and connected with gender constructs in the late middle ages.

Source Material: Hagiography in the Middle Ages

Saint's Lives were widely disseminated during the late middle ages, from iconography to literary texts to oral transmission through sermons and homilies.[132] By combining entertainment and devotion, the saint stood as a beloved and relatable figure.[133] Hagiographies were actively produced and commissioned for women and men alike in Latin and the vernacular. The oral transmission of Old and Middle English prose lives opened up hagiographies to all social classes.[134] The popularity and notoriety of the saint's life in medieval Europe reflected the importance of the saint in the lived experience of the clerical and lay community.[135] From the early medieval period, saints' lives have included figures from a vast range of social backgrounds. The ninth-century Old English Martyrology included popes,

[131] Devun notes, 'the alchemical hermaphrodite image of Christ and Mary is in contrast to the ambiguous position of intersex people during the period. Unlike the deformed monster of *De secretis mulierum* or the suspect figure *of De vitio sodomitico*, the Jesus-Mary hermaphrodite of the Book of the Holy Trinity is presented as an ideal'. See Devun, 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite', p. 217.
[132] Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 147; Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 11; Diane Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 63.
[133] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1550*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 174.
[134] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Saint's Lives and the Female Reader', *Forum for Modern Language Studie*s, 4 (1991), 314-332 (p. 314); Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing*, p. 63.
[135] Julia Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 610-634; Sarah Salih 'Introduction: Saints, Cults and Lives in Late Medieval England', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Sarah Salih (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 1-15, (p. 6); Lewis, The *Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England*, p. 11.

abbesses, prostitutes and parents among its saints. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw a rise in the popularity of the virgin martyr with texts like the Katherine Group, which was exclusively centred on virgin lives and written with a female audience in mind. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw holy wives, mothers and other women leading active lives of philanthropy taking centre stage.[136] English hagiographers, such as John Lydgate (c. 1370-1451) and Osbern Bokenham (c. 1393-1464), refashioned their saintly heroines into roles beyond that of 'the virgin': teachers, empresses, queens, and preachers.[137] By the late middle ages, hagiographies were established as key texts in pious reading and devotion, demonstrated by the extensive literary evidence of their popularity.[138]

Julia Boffey commented that the variety of hagiographies rose significantly due to the work of John Lydgate, a Benedictine monk of Bury St. Edmunds.[139] Lydgate's saints' lives exist in a wide range of formats, from short prayers and poems to substantial prose lives, such as *Life of our Lady* (c. 1415-16), a 5,932-line poem on Marian devotion that survives in over fifty manuscripts.[140] I analyse two of Lydgate's commissioned lives in Chapter One, which overviews male saints in the fifteenth century. The *Lives of St. Edmund and Fremund* (c. 1433-1434) were commissioned for Lydgate's house of Bury by the Abbott William Curteys, as a gift to King Henry VI.[141] John Whethamstede, the abbot of St. Albans, commissioned the *Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal* (c. 1439).[142] As prestigious commissions, both manuscripts

[136] Wogan-Browne, 'Saint's Lives and the Female Reader', p. 314.
[137] Karen A. Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature,* ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 335-351 (p. 344); Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 178.
[138] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by Wallace, p. 619; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 174.
[139] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', p. 623; Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 70-86 (p. 64).
[140] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', p. 634; Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', p. 64; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 155-205.
[141] Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', p. 65; Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', pp. 624-625.
[142] Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', p. 65; John North, *God's Clockmaker: Richard of Willingford and the Invention of Time* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 8.

were lavishly illuminated and survive in impressive forms and numbers.[143] Lydgate's *Lives of St. Edmund and Fremund* and *Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal* were aimed at an educated audience of a wealthy higher social class.[144] I have consulted British Library MS Harley 2278 and the Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 46, but quote directly from J. E Van Der Westhuzien's edited edition of *John Lydgate's The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal* and Anthony Bale's and A. S. G. Edwards's edited edition of *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund & Fremund and the Extra Miracles of St. Edmund*, due to the accuracy of the edited editions, time limitations, and because my thesis is focused on literary analysis.

The work of Osbern Bokenham also demonstrated the potential of hagiography to reach a wider audience beyond the monastic community. The discovery of the Abbotsford MS in 2004 emphasized the importance of Bokenham's literary canon and connections. The Abbotsford MS was discovered in the library of Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford House. Simon Horobin identified the Abbotsford MS as the lost Osbern Bokenham translation of Jacobus of Vorgagine's *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1259-1266) and has published several articles on its significance.[145] The manuscript also contains additional lives of British saints and saints of interest to the Austin friars.[146] In Bokenham's translation of the *Legenda Aurea,* he omitted or simplified complex theological matters and supernatural elements in favour of writing his

[143] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by Wallace, p. 625.
[144] Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', p 65; Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs,* p. 121. Lydgate also produced lives, such as his *Legend of St. Margaret* (1432) and an *Invocation to St. Anne* (1438), in the hope they would circulate amongst women and overstep class lines.
[145] Simon Horobin, 'A Manuscript Found in Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, 14 (2007), 132-64; Simon Horobin, 'Osbern Bokenham's Book of 'Legenda Aurea and of oþer famous legendes'', in *Saints and Cults in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2015 Harlaxton Symposium*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, ed. by Susan Powell (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2017), pp. 363-380; Simon Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', Speculum, 82, 4 (2007), 932-949. Simon Horobin has also published an edited edition of Bokenham's translation of the *Legenda Aurea*. See *Bokenham's Lives of the Saints*, ed. by Simon Horobin, EETS, Original Series no. 356 (Oxford: Published for The Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2020). As this was published this year, I was unable to consult it for my thesis. Also see Karen A. Winstead', 'Osbern Bokenham's "englische boke": Re-forming Holy Women', in *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Shannon Gayk and Kathleen Tonry (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), pp. 67-87.
[146] Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 935.

saints as moral examples of Christian life. Horobin stated that the lives were 'less models of sanctity and spirituality and challenges to the social hierarchy and more the embodiment of the fifteenth-century ideal of *courtesye*'.[147] Bokenham's readership consisted of a largely East Anglian network of noble households, religious houses, and local parish churches. However, the inclusion of several first-hand accounts of miracles and visits to shrines across Britain and Europe suggest the possibility of a wider distribution of Bokenham's work.[148] Horobin also challenged previous scholarship that dismissed Bokenham's writing as Yorkshire propaganda or a critique on Chaucer.[149] The Abbotsford MS demonstrates the conscious adaptability and collation of saint collections towards a range of audiences amongst the social spectrum.[150] This flexibility is evident in the inclusion of the saint's lives from Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (c. 1443-1447) in the Abbotsford MS that omit their patronage dedications.[151]

The *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* included thirteen legends, ranging from virgin martyrs such as St. Katherine and St. Christina, to married saints such as St. Elizabeth of Hungary and St. Anne. The majority of the lives were commissioned by patrons: for example, St. Anne's life (discussed in Chapter Three) was written for Katherine Clopton Denston, the wife of a wealthy merchant, who had recently given birth to a daughter named Anne.[152] Bokenham's

[147] Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', pp. 937-8. Courtesy was an ideal set of behaviours to which the aristocracy conformed. See J. W. Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy. A Study of Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain-Poet* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985); Anna Dronzek, 'Gendered Theories of Education in Fifteenth-Century Conduct Books', in *Medieval Conduct: Texts, Theories, Practices*, ed. by Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 135-159; Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 35.

[148] Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', pp. 939-40, 942-949.

[149] *Legendys of Hooly Wummen By Osbern Bokenham Edited From Ms Arundel 327*, ed. by Mary Serjeantson, EETS, Original Series no. 206 (London: Published for The Early English Text Society by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938); Eileen S. Jankowski, 'Reception of Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale: Osbern Bokenham's Lyf of S. Cycyle', *Chaucer Review*, 30 (1996), 306-18; Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England. The Work of Osbern Bokenham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', pp. 932-949.

[150] Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 949.

[151] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by Wallace, p. 626; Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', pp. 941-3.

[152] Gail McMurray Gibson 'Saint Anne and the Religion of Childbed: Some East Anglian Texts and Talismans', in *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Medieval Society*, ed. by Kathleen M. Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), pp. 104-107; Samantha Riches, 'Hagiography in Context: Images, Miracles, Shrines and Festivals', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 25-

Legendys of Hooly Wummen only survives in one manuscript, British Library MS Arundel 327; but the MS suggests a readership in both religious and lay communities. The manuscript of the completed collection was likely gifted to the nuns of Denny Abbey, and the individual stories were likely circulated in 'pious booklets'.[153] Although I consulted British Library MS Arundel 327, I quote Sherry L. Reames's edited version of Osbern Bokenham's 'Life of St. Anne' from *Middle English Legends of Women Saints* in my thesis, again for reasons of accuracy. During the research, I used Reames's edited text and *Saints Lives in Middle English Collections* (edited by E. Gordon Whatley, Anne B. Thompson, and Robert K. Upchurch) to identify popular and widely disseminated hagiographies of the late middle ages. Due to time and funding restrictions, I was unable to consult all of the manuscripts in these edited editions. I analysed the anonymous *Stanzaic Life of St. Katherine*, William Paris's *Life of St. Christina*, and Simon Winter's *Life of St. Jerome* from edited, printed versions.[154]

My primary source of reference throughout the thesis is the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438), as it was the first Middle English translation of Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. The most widely recognized source used for vernacular lives by hagiographers and church sermons was the *Legenda Aurea*, which survives in over eight hundred manuscripts. Jacobus of Voragine's collection of saint's lives was a central text of the middle ages. Originally intended as a pastoral aid for priests, the text was copied and translated several times, and its audience expanded within lay and monastic communities across Europe.[155] There are four surviving Middle English translations of the *Legenda Aurea:* the fourteenth-century Vernon *Golden Legend*,

46 (p. 25-6); Charlotte D'Evelyn, Frances A. Foster, 'Saint's Legends', in *A Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050-1550*, ed. by J. Burke Severs (Hamden: Archon Books, 1970), pp. 410-457 (p. 423).

[153] A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Transmission and Audience of Osbern Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen', in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 157-68; Virginia Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), p. 260.

[154] *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames; *Saints' Lives in Middle English*, ed. by E. Gordon Whatley, Anne B. Thompson and Robert K. Upchurch (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004).

[155] Eamon Duffy, 'Introduction', in *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints by Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. by William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. xi-xx (p. xi).

from the Bodleian Library MS, eng. Poet a. 1, which consists of eight lives in a rhyming couplet format; the *Gilte Legende*, which is a translation of Voragine's Latin text and Jean de Vignay's French translation; William Caxton's 1483 edition, which used the *Gilte Legende* as its English source; and Osbern Bokenham's translation in the Abbotsford MS, dated between 1450-1475.[156] Due to Caxton's translation being continuously reprinted from 1438-1527, and then revised in 1892, the *Gilte Legende* has largely been overshadowed in terms of scholarship and reception. Despite this, the edition survives in various stages of completion in eight fifteenth-century manuscripts: the British Library MS Harley 630, Harley 4775, Egerton 876, Add. MS 11565, Add. MS 35398, Bodleian MS. Douce 372, Lambert Palace MS 72, and Trinity College, Dublin Library MS. 319.[157] I have consulted the British Library and Bodleian Library manuscripts, but again for reasons of accuracy and time, I have used Richard Hamer's edited edition of the *Gilte Legende* for the Early English Text Society.

My criteria for including saint's lives in this thesis followed three main points: a fifteen-century date range, inclusion in the *Gilte Legende* or other *Golden Legend* hagiographical compilations, or popularity among the late medieval community. Due to this criterion, my thesis covers both historical and pseudo-historical saints and saints of a varying degree of recognition. For example, Chapter Two includes the widely popular life of St. Catherine of Alexandria, who is not a historical saint. Scholarship has suggested the life of St. Catherine was based on the life of St. Dorothea of Alexandria and the Greek philosophy Hypatia.[158] Chapter three includes the life of St. Paula. Although Paula's story was based on

[156] D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', p. 432; Karen A. Winstead, 'Fear in Late-Medieval English Martyr Legends', in *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*, ed. by Johan Leemans (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 201-220 (p. 202); Horobin, 'A Manuscript Found in Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham', pp. 132-64; The Advocates Library, 'Legenda Aurea', *The Faculty of Advocates* (2020) <http://www.advocates.org.uk/faculty-of-advocates/the-advocates-library/significant-finds-at-abbotsford/legenda-aurea> [accessed 6 December 2020].
[157] D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', pp. 559-560.
[158] Jacqueline Jenkins, Katherine J. Lewis, 'Introduction', *St. Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*, ed. by Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine Lewis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 1-18 (pp. 6-7).

historical sources, we do not have evidence that her life was particularly popular amongst the lay and clerical community, nor did she have a cult following like St. Catherine.[159] Despite this, Paula's legend appears in all four surviving Middle English adaptations of the *Golden Legend*.

Although the saints I discuss in each chapter follow particular pathways, they are not necessarily representative of all male saints, virgin martyrs, mother or trans* saints. There are alternative saints' lives that may challenge some of the assertions in this thesis. For example, St. Ursula does not follow a standard virgin martyr narrative. At the request of her father, Ursula, along with 11,000 virgin handmaids, sailed across the sea to meet her future husband. Before Ursula's marriage, she went on a pilgrimage, where she and her handmaids were besieged by the Huns and martyred.[160] Similarly, St. Helen of Anjou does not follow a typical mother saint narrative. As a queen consort, childbearing was an important factor in Helen's life. However, Helen's dynastic and political responsibilities did not interfere with her piety but accompanied it. Helen imitated the Virgin Mary and Empress Helena in their intercessory or 'peace-weaver' roles. According to her life by Archbishop St. Daniil II, Helen held an important role in resolving several conflicts in the Nemanjić dynasty. Helen also built monasteries, repaired and rebuilt churches, and founded a girl's school in medieval Serbia. After the death of her husband, Helen became dowager-queen to her two sons Stefan Dragutin (r. 1276–1282) and Stefan Milutin (r. 1282–1331). In 1308, she became a nun at the Church of St. Nicholas in Skadar until she died in 1314.[161] My chapters, therefore, highlight common

[159] Jerome's writings on St. Paula have been referred to as the 'textual underpinnings' for a cult of St. Paula. However, there is no evidence Jerome was successful in creating a cult following for Paula. See Andrew Cain, 'The Cult of 'Saint' Paula', in *Jerome's Epitaph on Paula A Commentary on the Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae with an Introduction, Text, and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 24-33.

[160] Scott B. Montgomery, *St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne: relics, reliquaries and the visual culture of group sanctity in late medieval Europe* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2009); Samantha Riches, 'Male Martyrs, Female Models? St. Ursula and St. Acacius as Leaders and Victims', in *The cult of St Ursula and the 11,000 virgins*, ed. by Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016), pp. 245-261.

[161] Martin Homza, *Mulieres Suadentes – Persuasive Women: Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2017) pp. 56-57; Helen E. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015); Filip Van Tricht, 'Latin emperors and Serbian

themes within saints' lives but not necessarily an overarching idea within each saintly category. For a complete breakdown of the selection of saints, see the 'Overview of Chapters' section of this introduction.

I chose the *Gilte Legende* as the original source point for the selection of saints in this thesis due to its universal appeal. The *Gilte Legende* contains numerous saints' lives and feast day celebrations; the tone is simple, emotive and moralizing, which suggests its primary use was for pastoral care and to appeal directly to a lay readership.[162] With its extant variation, wide dissemination and transmission, the translations of the *Legenda Aura* demonstrate how a text changed over time.[163] The *Gilte Legende* provides rich source material of saint's lives, which offer an important perspective on changing theological and devotional concerns.

Methodology: The Construction of the Saint's Flesh

Hagiography has a double purpose in honouring the saint and instructing its audience on the merits of the Christian faith.[164] A saint's life can combine fantasy and didacticism, providing entertainment, spiritual comfort and a model of Christian behaviour. However, the saint reflects the devotional practice and theological conditions of its period; retellings evolve and change.[165] Exemplarity is not static.[166] The saint's body acted as a sacred object that could be manipulated and used to transmit particular messages.[167] In discussing how monks and nuns purified their

queens: Anna and Helena: genealogical and geopolitical explorations in the post-1204 Byzantine World', *Frankokratia*, 1, (2020), 56-107.

[162] Theodor Wolpers, 'Die englischen Heilgenlegenden des Mittelalters: Eine Formgeschichte der Legendenerzählens von des spätantiken lateinischen Tradition bis zur Mitte der 16. Jahrhunderts. Buchreihe der Anglia 10. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1964', in *Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature VIII. Middle English Saints Legends*, ed. by John Scahill and Margaret Rogerson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 20-22 (p. 22).

[163] D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', p. 411.

[164] Wolpers, Die englischen Heilgenlegenden des Mittelalters', p. 22; D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', pp. 410-11.

[165] D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', p. 411.

[166] Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. x.

[167] Alain Boureau, 'Franciscan Piety and Voracity: Uses and Strategies in the Hagiographic Pamphlet', in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Roger Chariter, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 15-58 (p. 19).

flesh through fasting and prayer, Newman stated how they 'learned to live as an "angel in the body", transcending both the defilement of sex and the limitations of gender to become passionless, Spirit-filled, miracle-working source[s] of life and holiness for Christians still mired in the flesh'.[168] This reading demonstrates the power of how one's flesh is marked and read by the theological and medical discourses that define it, but also the redemptive properties it contains.[169] Shari Horner argued that the virgin martyr body became a text within a text, written upon and read in and outside the narrative.[170] Horner focused on the saint's tortured body as an artefact that contained and transmitted spiritual messages to its audience.[171] Images of St. Catherine and St. Margaret writing the sign of the cross onto their bodies before doing miraculous things in the name of God indicated how this act of writing upon themselves served as the means of their salvation. [172] When St. Lucy was stabbed in the throat but retained her voice, speaking with an eloquence she did not possess previously, the message to the reader is that the Word will always triumph over the letter of the flesh.[173] The Word, therefore, acted as a new layer of discourse, that redeemed and united the flesh with the spirit.[174] Using a lens of trans theory, I have built upon Horner's idea to demonstrate how saint's bodies have narratives imposed and written upon them, and that the flesh is the site of this discourse.

By adopting a lens of trans theory in my methodology, I can access and analyse medieval gender constructions outside a binary perspective. I have found the work of Sandy

[168] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 4.
[169] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, ed. 20. (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2008) pp. 24-5. 48, 426.
[170] Shari Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500: Volume One*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2012), pp. 95-102 (p. 95).
[171] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', p. 95.
[172] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', p. 97
[173] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', p. 99
[174] Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 48, 426; Brown explains that control of the flesh was not necessarily through the body, but the mind must be used to bring the flesh back to conformity with God's will. Julia Kristeva also discusses the importance of Christ's humanity in this reading of the flesh for Christ too dwelled within human flesh. Christ as flesh demonstrates the flesh as a site which has the ability to 'accede to glory rather than shame'. Also see Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 155-157; Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, pp. 19-20.

Stone particular useful, as it refuted Janice Raymond's definition that feminism should be built upon binary sexual and gender differences.[175] For my terminology, I have used Blake Gutt's and Alicia Spencer-Hall's 'Trans & Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide', from their forthcoming publication *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*.[176] It is also important to note that from this point on in the thesis, I use the umbrella term trans* when referring to the group of saints scholarship has deemed as 'transvestites'. The term trans* is an inclusive term that includes people who identify as transgender, gender-fluid, genderqueer, agender, and cross-dressers. I believe this is more appropriate than the term 'transvestite', which is associated with medical disorder by Magnus Hirschfeld.[177] The modern term trans* coincides with the aim of trans theorists, who use trans experiences to challenge hegemonic notions of sex and gender dualism and the medical discourses that subjugate lived experience. In response to Raymond's rigid and exclusionary definition of feminism, Sandy Stone, Susan Stryker, and Donna Haraway reimagined the trans body as not a problematic third gender or class, but a site of potential disruption and exploration of structured sexualities and desires.[178] The framework of trans theory in religious studies has focused on individual case studies, such as Leslie Feinberg's work on Joan of Arc. Autobiographical accounts that combined one's own experiences of gender and sexuality for religious exploration, such as the work of Jakob Hero and Joy Ladin, and most broadly the exploration of non-normative gendered subjects through a critical theoretical lens, such as the

[175] Sandy Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 211-235; Janice Raymond, *The Transexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994), p. 104.
[176] Blake Gutt, Alicia Spencer-Hall, 'Trans & Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2020), pp. 19-20. Available online at: Blake Gutt, Alicia Spencer-Hall, 'LHMP: A Guide to Gender-Inclusive Language for Historians', *Alpennia* (2019) <https://www.alpennia.com/blog/lhmp-guide-gender-inclusive-language-historians> [accessed 15 June 2020]
[177] Magnus Hirschfield, *Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross Dress* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1991); Blake Gutt, Alicia Spencer-Hall, 'Trans & Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide', pp. 28, 32-33.
[178] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', p. 223.

work of Amy Hollywood, Mark D. Jordan and Gayle Salamon. It is this latter category that is the basis of the theoretical framework for my thesis. Trans theory is a useful framework with which to analyse medieval gender constructions, as the contemporary terminology and parameters of the theory reflect the fluidity of medieval gender constructs, best understood outside a binary context. As previously discussed, the medieval body existed on a sliding scale of gender attributes one could adopt. The contemporary terminology and parameters of trans theory reflect the fluidity of medieval gender constructs and do not restrict them to binarism. Cultural stereotypes and restrictions also influenced the virtue and perception of the trans body and medieval gender attributes alike.

The written saint is typically male-authored, whether through hagiographers remodelling historical figures into tales of morality or confessors transcribing the visions and miracles of mystics.[179] In her discussion of early accounts of gender reassignment surgery in the 1980s, Sandy Stone stated how medical discourse, the media, and radical feminist theorists constructed the trans body, because the lived experiences of individuals was considered 'thoroughly unreliable.'[180] Likewise, the first-person voice of the saint was not enough; their

[179] There is ample research into saints' lives and their authorship. Vernacular texts were typically male-authored or anonymous, but there is evidence of some saints' lives written by women, such as the hagiographies by Clemence of Barking and Christine de Pizan's work. Diane Watt has examined women's writing in the early medieval period and argues that many texts became 'overwritten' by male monastic writers, obscuring original authorship. Authorship itself is also a contested site. It is important to note that the author as the sole originator of a text is a modern idea: many texts in the medieval period would have been collaborative efforts or produced anonymously, with God being considered the ultimate *auctor*. For more on this subject, see Jennifer Summit, 'Women and Authorship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 91-108; Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500*; *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500: Volume One*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt; Diane Watt, 'Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey', *Philological Quarterly*, 91 (2012), pp. 1-22; Diane Watt, 'The Earliest Women's Writing? Anglo-Saxon Literary Cultures and Communities', *Women's Writing,* 20 (2013), 537-554; Diane Watt, 'Literature in Pieces: Female Sanctity and the Relics of Early Women's Writing (500-1150)', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 357-380; Diane Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond, 650-1100* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2019); *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

[180] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, pp. 222, 230.

narratives needed to be legitimized.[181] Stone has questioned the agenda behind the medicalized requirements for gender reassignment surgery because the descriptions produced a performative version of 'woman', who remained an object of male fetish, and a Westernized, white definition of 'man'.[182] In a similar manner to how medicalised criteria developed and applied to transgender individuals to produce 'successful' post-surgery men and women, the saint's life became a prototype. André Vauchez and Caroline Walker Bynum identified the standard narrative formula for hagiographies: familial or societal strife, discord, and eventual reintegration either in society or heaven.[183] Essentially, the saint is a mirror reflecting the constraints and expectations of society to its audience, showing its readers how to act and behave in accordance with the Christian faith.

Like the trans body, the saint's flesh used the narratives and discourses of another to reflect a 'successful' performance of sainthood. In a medieval context, the flesh was separate to the self: although not considered innately driven to sin, it acted against the spirit in its drive toward vice and temptation.[184] The flesh was inscribed with the Fall and original sin, envisioned as a battleground between the self and the spirit.[185] The flesh was, therefore, imbued with cultural discourse; men and women's disposition were written upon their skin. The saint's flesh acted as 'culture speaking with the voice of an individual'.[186] The flesh stands as a site of cultural inscription, which can be reiterated to produce an 'ideal type'. As significantly, the flesh was capable of redemption through spiritual dedication and controlling one's urges and

[181] Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writings of Late Medieval Visionaries* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997). See Chapter Two for a discussion on why female speech was feared and what processes occurred for it to become legitimised.
[182] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', pp. 224, 228.
[183] André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 371-380; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality', in *Fragmentation and Redemption,* pp. 27-52. Vauchez and Bynum's theories on saint's lives are discussed throughout the thesis.
[184] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 48, 426.
[185] Augustine referred to the fissure between the flesh and the spirit as 'the gap which the self-fell from God and from itself'. See Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, pp. 19-21.
[186] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, p. 229.

impulses.[187] Supporting, reinforcing, and reflecting these cultural norms offers normative models of identification to the audience.[188] The saint's flesh is a composite of cultural texts written upon it, from trends in devotional practices to the physiology of the gendered body.

I am mindful of forcing modern terminology and ideals onto the past. Therefore, I will analyse the hagiography as a vital record of medieval ideas but not conflate them with the lived experience of actual bodies: 'the historical realm of fiction and fantasy that is also the domain of contemporary transgender studies'.[189] The interrelationship between language and religion in the late middle ages is demonstrated in the importance of hagiographies and auto-hagiographies as source materials that display the significance of divine relationships to personal and communal identities. In examining the interconnection between the gendered body and holiness of the saint, this thesis offers a new perspective on how medieval gender constructs influenced men and women's pathways to piety, as the saint's flesh provides a unique site of cultural inscription, where humanity and holiness meet. The saint acts as a model of Christian devotion and virtue, imitating the ultimate models that united humanity and holiness: Christ and the Virgin Mary. This thesis demonstrates that to overcome cultural limitations and preconceptions, the shared flesh of Christ and Mary acted as a unifying discourse for both sexes that offered a universal pathway towards Christianity outside binary notions of gender.

Overview of Chapters

To determine the gendered framework of the late middle ages, Chapter One expands on medieval attitudes towards gender. It challenges the social structures that categorise the male

[187] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist,* p. 217; Alfred Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 98; Bynum. *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 289.
[188] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', p. 230; Caterina Nirta, *Marginal Bodies, Trans Utopias* (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 1.
[189] Karl Whittington, 'Medieval', *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1 (1-2) 2014, 125-129 (p. 129).

body as default by analysing how a man's religious life intersected with his masculine identity. The anxieties caused by the break away from normative societal roles and the rewriting of chivalric masculinity in a religious context is evaluated against Caroline Walker Bynum's theory that male hagiographies use images of gendered reversal to remove their hierarchal 'male' status to connect with Christ's humanity.[190] I include an analysis of Bonaventure's (c. 1221-1274) biography of St. Francis of Assisi to offer a different reading of the life from Bynum's theory. In discussing the importance of Christ's humanity, the first chapter will also examine the notion of dual identities existing in union within one body and their gendered implications. The idea of multiplicity is demonstrated in my selection of saints in this chapter, who cover many imitation models derived from Christ. For example, like Christ, St Edmund is a virgin, martyr, and king, and the knight St. Alban is the first recorded British Christian martyr, referred to as the protomartyr.

Chapter Two continues to study Christ as a model of identification by looking at narratives of some female virgin martyrs. My selection of virgin martyr saints was derived from the *Gilte Legende*, due to their popularity and similar narrative arcs. I examine the interrelation between female virginity and bodily *integritas* (wholeness), which produced the dominant discourse in reading the female body as an innately open and porous vessel in need of enclosure. Virginity offered women a means of guarding themselves against both internal and external threat. Looking at medical, religious and literary discourses on the female body and its function, I discuss images of sin, torture and the martyred female body that bleeds milk instead of blood. This image will be contextualised against theological trends of the fifteenth century, such as the devotion to Christ's wounds, Mary's association with blood (based on theories Mary did not menstruate and experienced a bloodless labour due to her purity) and the

[190] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 38; Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother', pp. 257-284; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Bynum's theory is a critique of Victor Turner's theory of liminality. See Victor Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories About Them', in *On Narrative*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 137-164.

implications of their shared flesh as a site of identification. This theory extends Amy Hollywood's and Karma Lochrie's research on the queering of Christ's wounds as a vagina and the blood of Christ as not simply a product of purification but unification.[191]

Chapter Three addresses how some mother saints appropriated their experience of childbirth and motherhood to redefine their piety. The chapter discusses marriage, childbirth, and motherhood in the fifteenth century. To define and contextualise the role of the mother in medieval society, I analyse both medical and religious discourses that parallel the need for virgins to 'protect their boundaries from sin' in a policing of bodily borders and thresholds through both the lying-in period and ritual of churching.[192] In using the work of Miri Rubin, Hilda Graef, Donna Spivey Ellington, and Kate Koppelman, the chapter will produce a timeline of Mariological trends. It analyses the Virgin Mary's role as a mother to demonstrate the medieval flesh as a site of restoration and redemption. My selection of mother saints stems from their inclusion in Middle English translations of the *Golden Legend*, mainly the *Gilte Legende* and Osbern Bokenham's translation in the Abbotsford MS. I also include lives written by popular fifteenth-century English hagiographers, such as Bokenham's 'Life of St. Anne' (c. 1443-1447) and John Capgrave's *Life of St. Augustine* (c. 1450), which included a miniature *vita* of St. Monica, for comparison. The included mother saints follow similar narrative patterns and deal with the themes of the body and sacrifice.

The fourth chapter analyses the lives of a selection of trans* saints to determine how the shared flesh of Christ and Mary acted as a site of identification. It discusses trans theory terminology and its application to reading medieval gender constructs. This chapter discusses

[191] Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Lochrie, McCracken and Schuitz, pp. 180-200; Hollywood, '"That Glorious slit"', in *Luce Irigaray and Premodern Culture: Thresholds of Histor*y, ed. by Harvey and Krier, pp. 105-126.

[192] See Clarissa W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Medieval West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Elizabeth L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood: Gender, Dynasty, and Visual Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008*); Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Anneke Mulder-Bakker (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016); *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*, ed. by Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Flemming and Lauren Kasell (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018).

maleness as a moral quality in religious doctrine that encouraged a paradoxical ideology that incited and dissuaded female masculinity.[193] This theme is most clearly represented in the hagiographies of the trans* saints, who were chosen based on their inclusion in the Middle English translations of the *Golden Legend*. I refute previous scholarship that the trans* saints reject or erase their femininity in their devotion by establishing how they become both 'perfect men' and 'perfect women' through the shared flesh of Mary and Christ.

[193] For an overview of trans theory see Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*; Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, 2 vols (New York: Routledge, 2006); Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (New York: Seal Press, 2017). For an overview of scholarship about maleness as moral quality see Elizabeth Castelli, '"I Will Make Mary Male": Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity', in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Identity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 29-49; Miri Rubin, 'The Person in the Form: Medieval Challenges to Bodily Order', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 100-122; Karen A. Lurkhur, 'Medieval Silence and Modern Transsexuality', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 11, 4 (2010), 220-238.

Chapter 1

'A lamb in chaumbre, in batail a leon': Christ as Exemplar in Fifteenth-Century Male Hagiography

Off Adamys synne was wasshe away the rust
Be vertu only off this lambys blood.
The serpentys venym and al fleshy lust
Sathan outraied ageyn man most wood.
Tyme when this lamb was offred on the rood
For our redempcion.[1]

Introduction

In discussing how a man's religious life intersected with his masculine identity, current scholarship has strayed from the early readings that placed monastic men as effeminate or occupying a third gender. In recent years, the central argument has understood masculinity as multiple and varied, similar to the way in which research on medieval femininity has argued for a nuanced understanding that recognised how different cultures and subcultures identified and acted. Medieval masculinity cannot be reduced to the simplistic categories of those who prayed, those who worked, and those who fought.[2] In this chapter, I will establish the complex and paradoxical motifs of male identification. Due to their edifying purpose in both secular and religious communities, I will examine hagiographies and how the figure of Christ aided in appropriating and affirming medieval masculinity. I look at a wide selection of saints' lives, from the proto-martyr St. Alban and the virgin king St. Edmund to the preacher and religious order-founder St. Francis in the English translation of Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1259-1266), the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438), and the verse narratives of the fifteenth-century English writer John Lydgate. These male saints reflected the multiple images of Christ, who was the perfect model or exemplar, that caused pious men to acquire 'feminine attributes' and women to 'become male' in their virile religiosity. In analysing language and imagery

[1] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund & Fremund and the Extra Miracles of St. Edmund: Edited from British Library MS Harley 2278 and Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 46*, ed. by Anthony Bale and A. S. G. Edwards (Heidelberg: Middle English Texts, 2009), p. 33, II. 17-22.
[2] Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

appropriation, in particular motifs of sacrifice, redemption and humoral balance, this chapter attempts a clearer understanding of Christ as an exemplar, positing that male saints did not merely appropriate feminine ideals of holiness but used the image of Christ as an inclusive model of sanctity that expressed the nuances of the gendered body in the middle ages. Christ offered an ideal body of humoral harmony that united the positive attributes of masculinity and femininity.

The Saint in Medieval Hagiography

From 1000-1499 approximately 84 per cent of saints were male.[3] These figures indicate the vast number of roles that the male saint occupied in secular society and the Church. As the Church excluded women from leadership roles, female saints tend to fit into three categories: virgin martyr, mother, and penitent saint. In contrast, male saints were not confined to three archetypical roles. Looking at the epithets in the *Gilte Legende*, male saints are called doctors of the Church, bishops, knights, abbots, apostles, and martyrs.[4] Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg and Caroline Walker Bynum note that the fifteenth century saw a shift in hagiographical

[3] These figures are based on an average percentage from Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell's study on the 1926 edition of *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg's study on the saints listed in the *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, and Jerome Kroll and Bernard S. Bachrach's study on Thurston and Attwater's 1956 edition of *Butler's Lives of the Saints*. Weinstein and Bell concluded that there were 157 male saints and 23 female saints recorded between 1000-1500. This equates to 85.4% male and 14.6% female. See Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society: Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 121-122, p. 135. Tibbetts Schulenburg notes that from 1000-1199 the percentage of male saints was 88.3% and between 1300-1499 the average percentage was 74.25% (an overall average of 81%). Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Sexism and the celestial gynaecium – from 500 to 1200', *Journal of Medieval History*, 4 (1978), 117-133, (p. 122, p. 131, n. 11). Kroll and Bachrach concluded that 87.8% of saints were male between 1000-1500. See Jerome Kroll and Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics*, 2nd edn (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 91-128. For an overview, see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 9-11. Noted earlier studies include Pitrim A. Sorokin, *Altruistic Love: A Study of American "Good Neighbours" and Christian Saints* (Boston: Beacon, 1950); Pierre Delooz, *Socioologie et canonisations. Collection scientifique de la Faculté de Droit de l'Université de Liég*e, 30 (Liége: Faculte de Droit, 1969); and for a shorter study on Butler's lives see Katherine George and Charles George, 'Roman Catholic Sainthood and Social Status: A Statistical and Analytical Study', *Journal of Religion*, 35 (1955), 85-98. It is important to note these studies were not weighted for popularity of the saints amongst the local and wider community.

[4] Karen Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 192, fn. 35. Winstead notes that although the women hold occupations such as abbess, nun, martyr, and queen, the only female epithet is 'virgin'. Despite there being numerous male virgins, none of them are referred to as such in their epithets.

representation. During 1215-1500 there were more female lay saints than male.[5] Married female saints, who were sparsely represented in the early middle ages, also grew in number and influence.[6] In his study on canonization proceedings, André Vauchez reported that after 1200, sanctity began to become feminised.[7] Jerome Kroll and Bernard S. Bachrach's study of Thurston and Attwater's 1956 edition of *Butler's Lives of the Saints* illustrated the breakdown of the female saint between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Representations of heroic asceticism (fasting, laceration of the flesh, and sleep deprivation) typically denoted as a feminine form of piety increased from 10 per cent from the fifth to tenth centuries to 33 per cent in the late middle ages.[8] Likewise, female mystics represented 50 per cent of female hagiographies in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.[9] In contrast, male mystics only represented 15 per cent.[10] However, despite the increased representation of female sanctity, the number of male saints far outweighed the number of female saints.

To add to the database studies completed by Weinstein and Bell, Schulenburg, and Kroll and Bachrach, the *Gilte Legende* comprises 82 per cent male, 15 per cent female, and 3 per cent trans* saints.[11] It is also important to note that female saints' function and worth have been linked to their religious usefulness to men, either in the form of a critique of male practice, an endorsement of alternative communal and generative possibilities within a religious sphere,

[5] Schulenburg, 'Sexism and the celestial gynaecium – from 500 to 1200', p. 127; Bynum, *Jesus as* Mother, p. 137, f. 94.
[6] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 137-138.
[7] André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p. 172.
[8] Kroll, Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, p. 116.
[9] Kroll, Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, p. 117.
[10] Kroll, Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind*, p. 117.
[11] These percentage were derived from the total number of male saints' lives (132), female saints' lives (24), and trans* saints' lives (5) divided by the total number of saints' lives (161). These numbers exclude the lives of archangels, the Virgin, and Christ. Each saint was only counted once regardless of the numbers of lives (for example, there are two lives of St. Paul entitled 'Conversion of St. Paul' and 'St. Paul, the apostle'). Likewise, for lives that included multiple saints, they were counted individually, even if they were not named in the title (for example, 'St. Quiricus and Julitta' were counted as one male saint life and one female saint life; 'St. Protus and Hyacinth' were counted as two male saints lives and one female saint's life, as the hagiography also details St. Eugenia's Life).

or an image of escapism.[12] This latter point formed the argument of Caroline Walker Bynum's work on the differences between male and female hagiography.

In *Fragmentation and Redemption*, Bynum discussed the linguistic symbols used in male and female saints' *vitae* from 1200-1500. Bynum based her argument on Victor Turner's theory of liminality, which determined when an individual or a 'subject' changed state or social position, they went through three phases: separation, marginality (*limen*), and reaggregation.[13] In the first stage, a 'subject' detached themselves from established social structures and cultural conditions. During *limen*, the 'subject' (or as Turner refers to them, the 'passenger' or 'liminar') became ambiguous, between all points of classification. In the third stage the subject re-entered society, often at a higher social status.[14] In a critique of Victor Turner's theory, Bynum argued that male hagiographies conformed to 'social dramas' that used images of gendered reversal to express liminality, while female hagiographies did not follow this pattern.[15] As male biographers penned the majority of writing, hagiographies on female saints attempted to follow the same pattern as male *vitae* that included a narrative form of situation, discord and resolution. However, given women's role as 'inspired vessel' and their inferior position in society, those in religious roles were both encouraged and feared. Therefore, chastity and marital status were typically central themes.[16] Bynum concluded that while

[12] Bynum, *Fragmentation and* Redemption, pp. 17, 36-37; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 256-62.
[13] Victor Turner, 'Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas', in Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 231-271 (pp. 231-2). See also 'Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors', in Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, pp. 23-59. These chapters are foundational to Turner's methodology in the paper that Bynum is responding to. See Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories About Them', in *On Narrative*, ed. by Mitchell, pp. 137-164 (p. 145-149).
[14] Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, pp. 231-2.
[15] Turner distinguishes social dramas as a story with four phases. The first stage (breach) stage involves a challenge to authority: the breaking of a social norm such as a rule of custom, law, morality, or etiquette. This is followed by a crisis; a turning point in social structure where the breach widens, and sides are taken. This leads to redress mechanisms to stop the breach from spreading, in line with the impact of the breach from personal advice and formal legal advice to the sacrificing of a victim as scapegoat in ordered to reform the collective 'sin'. The final phase is either reintegration into the social order, or if the breach is irreparable, spatial separation. Social dramas occur within social groups who share the same values, virtues and history. They typically centre around those whom had a high value priority within the group. See Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories About Them', pp. 137-164; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35.
[16] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 23

women's stories concentrated on continuity rather than change, men's stories were of active, heroic gestures.[17] Men told dramatic stories of crises and external events using symbols of inversion and reversal; women used their everyday experiences of nurturing and illness to create personalised stories, without crises but deeper, internal understandings. Consequently, female saints were seen as representations of constant suffering and inner spirituality, whereas male saints were models of action and drama.[18]

Bynum directly linked the 'social drama' aspect of male saints' lives to the use of images of gendered reversal. These images occur during times of self-doubt, weakness, and when the male self was unable to define itself under Georges Duby's three orders of society: those who prayed, those who fought, and those who tilled the soil.[19] As women were outside the standard medieval societal structure, male writers implemented the stereotypical image of women (virgin, bride, mother) to communicate and understand their positions outside the secular world.[20] This position, however, was temporary; the drama of the male saint's life lies in his escape from secular society; thus his loss of status, and his reintegration into an ecclesiastical institution that regains their lost status and power.[21]

To substantiate her point on how male saints' lives were dramatized through gendered images of reversal, Bynum referred to St. Bonaventure's (c. 1221-1274) biography of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis is one of the most well-known medieval saints due to the extensive body of surviving material written by himself and his companions.[22] There were three authorised lives commissioned for St. Francis after his death, two written by Thomas of Celano in 1228 and 1243 and one by Bonaventure in 1260.[23] Versions of St. Francis's life were also

[17] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 25.
[18] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 25. See Chapter Two, 'How to Make a Virgin Martyr', of this thesis for a further discussion on the conventions of female hagiography.
[19] Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, p. 353; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35.
[20] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption,* p. 36.
[21] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption,* p. 36; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 257-62.
[22] Mary Ann Stouck, 'St. Francis of Assisi: His Conversion and Stigmata', in a *Short Reader of Medieval Saints*, ed. by Mary Ann Stouck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 120-141 (p. 120).
[23] Stouck, 'St. Francis of Assisi: His Conversion and Stigmata', p. 120.

included in several hagiographical collections, such as Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, the *South English Legendary* (c. 1200-1300), and the *Gilte Legende*. Bonaventure's life described St. Francis as a mother, labouring for his congregation, and conceiving the Gospel as a symbolic birth.[24] Despite St. Francis's feminisation, in death he is described as a founder, leader, exemplar, model and the father of his friars. Bynum concluded, 'this life is a drama. The story told of it is a drama. From the liminality of weakness, nudity, and womanliness comes the leader and model who changes the religious life of the thirteenth century.'[25] Bynum's reading of male hagiographical convention demonstrates how the male saint implemented and dismantled the cultural belief of the male as the superior or 'default' body associated with the divine.[26] Female imagery served to strip the male saint of his masculine power. The female imagery acts as a temporary escape whilst religious masculinity is revised. This adjustment period reflects the anxieties created when religious life and secular masculinity intersected.

In his analysis of medieval masculinity, Vern Bullough presented a tripartite model of manliness. The objectives of the medieval man were 'impregnating women, protecting dependents, and providing for one's family'.[27] In using this as a universal classification of manhood during the medieval period, a celibate group of men, like the clergy or monks, would

[24] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35. Bynum is referring to Chapter Three of Bonaventure's *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, which reads: 'Francis, the servant of God, abiding at the church of the Virgin Mother of God, with continuous sighing besought her that had conceived the Word full of grace and truth that she would deign to become his advocate; and, by the merits of the Mother of Mercy, he did himself conceive and give birth unto the spirit of Gospel truth.' And Chapter Thirteen: 'It was the custom of that angelic man, Francis, never to be slothful in good, but rather, like the heavenly spirits on Jacob's ladder, to be ever ascending toward God, or stooping toward his neighbour. For he had learnt so wisely to apportion the time granted unto him for merit that one part thereof he would spend in labouring for the profit of his neighbours, the other he would devote unto the peaceful ecstasies of contemplation'. See *The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Bonaventure*, trans. by E. Gurney Salter (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1904). Available online at: Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020].

[25] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35.

[26] See the Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages', for a discussion on the cultural and biological differences between the sexes.

[27] Vern L. Bullough, 'On Being Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. by Lees, Fenster and McNamara, pp. 31-46 (pp. 31-36); Bullough's model is derived from David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990).

fail. The transition between laymen and religious life resulted in both men and women forsaking marriage and sexual relations, thus redefining femininity and masculinity. As the main concepts that defined masculinity in the secular world (such as sexual virility and propagation, military prowess, and homosocial activities like hunting) were not permitted under religious orders, men experienced a great social shift conforming to monastic life.[28] This chapter builds on Bynum's argument that men adopted feminine attributes to redefine their masculinity in a religious setting, arguing that this was a fundamental process in male saints *imitatio Christi*.

Christ as Exemplar

Christ, as Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430AD) thought, was not only a saviour but a role model and inspiration; he was the paradigm, the ultimate moral example for all men (with the term 'men' used in the universal sense).[29] Imitating Christ stemmed from the theological concepts of divine filiation (that Christ is the Son of God and redeemed Christians are children of God), and the *Imago Dei* [image of God] (that humans are created in the likeness of God).[30] Therefore, to follow Christ held a dual meaning: to obey his teachings and to imitate the example he set in his life.

In Augustine's treatise *Of Holy Virginity* (c. 401AD), he instructed female virgins to 'follow Him, as you deserve, in virginity of heart and flesh, wheresoever He shall have gone. For what is it to follow, but to imitate?'[31] Although Augustine's treatise was intended for a

[28] Emma Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's *Opus Geminatum De virginitate*', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp. 8-23 (p. 9). For discussions on how women's social role shifted when they entered religious life see Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this thesis.
[29] Warren Thomas Smith, *Augustine: His Life and Thought* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1980), p. 128.
[30] Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought: The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, the Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, the Orders of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 146.
[31] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 174; 'St. Augustine, Of Holy Virginity', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* First Series, ed. by Philip Schaff, trans. by C. L. Cornish, vol. 3 (Buffalo:

virginal female audience, it demonstrates how to follow Christ's example bypassed standard gender conventions. Christ offered a new standard of imitation that incorporated the 'feminine' attributes of humility, meekness and chastity, with the 'masculine' attributes of courage, strength and virility. Depictions of Christ transcended gender, age, and form. He was simultaneously depicted as the innocent Christ child, the crucified adult man, the vaginal birthing wound of the Church, a mother offering unconditional love, and the heroic spiritual warrior of the early Desert Fathers' writings.[32] Christ represented a body model that incorporated all the positive aspects of each gender and united them within one body, demonstrating a perfect model of sanctity. The hagiographies of male saints provide a robust example of how the image of Christ was used to understand new religious models of masculinity.[33] To demonstrate Christ as the ultimate model of imitation, the following section considers three of the most dominant roles that Christ occupied and male saints projected: virgin, soldier and martyr.

Reformation, Sacrifice, and the Male Virgin

One of the main differences between religious and secular life stemmed from the eleventh-century Gregorian reform movement. Pope Gregory VII (r.1073-1085) and his supporters initiated clerical independence and stricter guidelines for moral integrity. The reform led to the centralisation of the papacy and the establishment of a policy for clerical celibacy, as reformers believed that sexually-active priests would be a 'polluting presence at the altar' when performing the sacrament of the Eucharist.[34] By advocating clerical celibacy, ecclesiastical

Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887). Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'Of Holy Virginity', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1310.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (para. 27).

[32] Katherine Allen Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, pp. 86-112 (p. 88).

[33] In later chapters, I will discuss Christ's influence on virgin martyrs, mother saints, and trans* saints.

[34] Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

reformers sought to elevate and separate the clergy from the laity and remove the Church from hereditary dynasties.[35] As it was common for parish priests and upper clergy members to marry, historically churches were passed down as benefices to their sons or as dowries attached to their daughters.[36] Celibacy was therefore applicable on an economic and theological level.

Anxieties around the carnal nature of the female body led to extensive texts written for a female audience about the importance of preserving their virginity.[37] The body of the female virgin was closest to Christ's human form, for the bride of Christ was 'ilich him in halschipe, vnwemment as he is' [like him in integrity, spotless as he is].[38] However, considering the question, 'what, after all, is a male virgin?' Maud Burnett McInerney concluded that male virgins were non-existent ('rare as hen's teeth').[39] The clear bodily markers of virginity were anatomically female; the hymen, however culturally constructed or 'invented', acted as a device in which 'female bodies speak their sexuality history'.[40] It was also believed that a virgin could only secrete 'pure liquids'; therefore, it was possible to distinguish between a virgin and a woman who had undergone intercourse with a man by a clear urinalysis.[41] For a medieval man, there was no anatomical hymen to break, pregnancy to be avoided, or fluid test to check their inner purity – their bodies could not speak their transgressions.[42] However, this should not discount the value or existence of male virgins in the middle ages. As there was no definite

[35] Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, 'Introduction: Rethinking the Medieval Clergy and Masculinity', in *Negotiating Clerical Identities,* ed. Thibodeaux, pp. 1-15 (p. 6).
[36] Katheryn Ann Taglia, '"On Account of Scandal": Priests, their Children and the Ecclesiastical Demand for Celibacy', *Florilegium*, 14 (1995), 57-70.
[37] For further information about female virginity see Chapter Two.
[38] 'Hali Meithhad', *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertston, 3:1.
[39] Maud McInerney, 'Rhetoric Power and Integrity in the Passion of the Virgin Martyr', in *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Kathleen Coye Kelly and Marina Leslie (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1999), pp. 50-70 (pp. 57-58).
[40] Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England*, p. 27.
[41] Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), p. 30.
[42] John H. Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih, and Ruth Evans (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 102-118 (p. 103). For an argument on the 'male hymen' as a social marker of virginity see Kathleen Coyne Kelly, 'Menaced Masculinity and Imperiled Virginity in Malory's *More D'arthur*', in *Menacing Virgins*, pp. 97-114 (p. 112).

way to determine if a man was a virgin, chastity and virginity became synonymous. Virginity could be retained *and* actively restored.[43]

The vitae of St. Jerome (c. 347-420AD) shows how the terms virginity and chastity became interchangeable. As one of the most prolific writers in Latin Christianity, Jerome was widely recognised during the middle ages as a priest and theologian through his Bible translations, influential treatises on Christianity, and scriptural commentaries. As he was a saint, a doctor of the Church and a prominent member of the Roman clergy, Jerome's life was included in several widely disseminated hagiographical complications, such as Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, the *South English Legendary*, and the *Gilte Legende*. Simon Winter (n.d.), a Bridgettine monk at Syon abbey, also wrote a Middle English prose life of St. Jerome, intended for his devout female audience between 1422-1440.[44]

The *Gilte Legende* described St. Jerome as a 'clene uirgine into the late end of his lyff'.[45] In Simon Winter's *Life of St. Jerome*, St Augustine has a vision of Jerome and John the Baptist. Augustine described the men as brighter than the sun, one wearing three crowns upon his head, the other two. John the Baptist explained that the 'crowne that I bere more than he ys the aurealle of martyrdome by the whyche I ended my bodily lyfe | [..] the ij. other crownes that bothe he and I have are | the aureols that are dew oonly to virgyns and doctoures'.[46] Although the text correctly recognised Jerome as a Doctor of the Church, he was not a virgin. Unlike Winter's version, which redacted this fact, the *Gilte Legende* life explained how Jerome extolled virginity as high as heaven – not because he possessed it, but that by not possessing it he admired it more: 'Y shall bere uirginite with me to heuene, and not for that y haue it, bur

[43] The idea of being able to restore one's virginity was not as straightforward for women. The *Hali Meithhad*, which linked the virgin female body with Christ's, compares female virginity to a treasure once lost that can never be found, a flower once cut that can never grow back. See 'Hali Meithhad': 8:6. For further analysis on the restoration of virginity for women see Chapter Three.
[44] Simon Winter, 'The Life of St. Jerome', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English*, ed. by Whatley, Thompson and Upchurch.
[45] 'St. Jerome', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 718-724, (p. 720, II. 70-71).
[46] Winter, 'The Life of St. Jerome', II. 379-386.

for that y wonder that y haue it not'.[47] In comparison, St Jerome's letter to Eustochium, St. Paula's virgin daughter, explained the daily toil one must endure to devote oneself to a life of virginity. For 'virginity may be lost even by a thought', and physical virginity alone did not mean one would be saved.[48] Whereas Jerome noted Eustochium's virginity as something she must retain at all costs, Jerome's virginity is interchangeable with his chastity in later life. Winter rewrote Jerome's chastity as virginity. Winter omitted Jerome's confession that he had not been chaste and removed the sexual overtones from his time spent in the desert. Instead, he solely focused on Jerome's penance, fasting and weeping.[49]

It is important to consider the audience of Winter's hagiography in this reading. Winter wrote the hagiography for Margaret Holland, the Duchess of Clarence, to read and educate herself on spiritual matters and to disseminate to others. Therefore, it was intended for a devout female audience (the Duchess was residing at Syon Abbey).[50] The male body, which does not easily 'speak' its transgression, is used as a superior bodily example for women, demonstrating that, for religious women, virginity meant more than simply refraining from sexual relations; unlike men, their youthful indiscretions could not be omitted or 'rewritten'. As Sarah Salih argued, for medieval nuns virginity was 'the paradigmatic virtue which establish[ed] their adherence to the monastic community and the production of a properly gendered monastic self'.[51] For monastic women, virginity was the openly readable sign that their bodies were pure,

[47] 'St. Jerome', *Gilte Legende*, p. 720, II. 71-74. This is a direct quotation from St. Jerome's letter to Pammahcius: 'virginitatem autem in coelum fero, non quia habeam, sed quia magis mirer quod non habeo'. Jerome's letters are available online at Tertullian, 'Letter XLVIII to Pammachius', *The Tertullian Project* (2018) <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/NPNF2-06/Npnf2-06-03.htm#P1521_340506> [accessed 23 February 2018] (para 20).

[48] St. Jerome advises Eustochium to avoid wine, covetousness, long-haired men and married women, eat simply, avoid visiting the houses of the high-born, refrain from listening to idle gossip and maintain a pure heart. See Tertullian, 'Letter XXII. To Eustochium', *The Tertullian Project* (2018) <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/NPNF2-06/Npnf2-06-03.htm#P583_110510> [accessed 23rd February 2018] (paras. 5, 8, 13, 16, 28, 29, 31).

[49] 'St. Jerome', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 597-602 (p. 559).

[50] George Keiser, 'Patronage and Piety in Fifteenth-Century England: Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, Symon Wynter and Beinecke MS 317', *YULG*, 60 (1985), 32-53.

[51] Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England*, p. 124.

intact, and held the possibility for holy intervention. For men, virginity symbolized the dedication and control they had exerted over their bodies. In other words, it was a way in which to follow the example Christ had set on Earth through His virginal body and the worldly temptations He overcame.

All the versions of St. Jerome's life discussed here show how his chastity/virginity was achieved through strict disciplinary practices of denouncing his lecherous thoughts and sinful flesh.[52] In particular, Jerome's episode in the desert demonstrated how he controlled his body. The desert as the place in which Jerome was tempted and overcame worldly vice was a clear allusion to the temptation of Christ. After his baptism, Christ was led into the Judaean Desert by the Holy Spirit where the Devil tempted Him for forty days and forty nights.[53] During his fast, the Devil tempted Christ to turn stones into bread to end His hunger. The Devil's second temptation encouraged Christ to prove His divine nature by jumping off the top of the Temple of Jerusalem to see if God's angels would save Him. For the Devil's last temptation, he offered Christ dominion over all the Earthly kingdoms if He worshipped him instead of God. Jesus's temptation in the desert demonstrated how He also experienced human struggles, from hunger to doubt, but was able to overcome them through human suffering and sacrifice. Jerome's desert experience demonstrated individual distress, but his suffering is situated in the body and sexual desire. The *Legenda Aurea* featured Jerome experiencing lust-filled driven visions of clusters of pretty girls dancing around him, indicating his overpowering sexual urges.[54] The *Gilte Legende* and Simon Winter's translations of Jerome's life suppressed this explicit scene. Instead, the texts used racial and animalistic imagery to other his body. Jerome stated how his body had become deformed, clad in strife, and his skin had now become black like an Ethiopian or an Indian man. He discussed befriending scorpions and wild beasts and how he only

[52] Winter, 'The Life of St. Jerome', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English*, ed. by Whatley, Thompson and Upchurch, II. 124-142; 'St. Jerome', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 719-720, II. 42-66.
[53] Accounts of Christ's temptation are recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
[54] 'St. Jerome', *The Golden Legend*, p. 130.

communicated through wailing and weeping.[55] Despite his exertions, he still felt 'the firy dartis of lecherie growed in [his] cold bodi and in [his] flesshe'.[56] Jerome's time in the desert is a symbolic battle against his own body. The desert, with its overpowering heat and dryness, symbolises the humoral nature of man. In Jerome's penance, he desired to reverse his own nature. By fasting, weeping and punishing his body, he hoped to become colder and moister in composition, dampening the 'fire of lechery' in his flesh. Jerome is equally presented as a virginal body and a chaste man who successfully overcame the flaws of the male body through faith. For a male audience, Jerome shows that the sexual threat of the male body lies within.

Whereas female discourses on virginity typically focused on protecting the sealed body from penetrating forces, texts on the male body focused on masturbation and the expelling of the seed.[57] During the middle ages, there was a large quantity of material that addressed the anxiety that surrounded involuntary nocturnal emissions. The main concern was not that these emissions were unclean, but that they were crossing a boundary of the body against man's will.[58] As bodily control and chastity were vital aspects of salvation, instances of involuntary ejaculation challenged notions of man's ability to control their flesh.[59] Jacqueline Murray has read this literature as projecting an internal battle within the male body as if their 'vile members' had a will of their own.[60] Dyan Elliott has noted the shifted accountability for

[55] Winter, 'The Life of St. Jerome', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English*, ed. by Whatley, Thompson and Upchurch, II. 128-141; 'St. Jerome', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 719-720, II. 42-66.
[56] 'St. Jerome', *Gilte Legende*, p. 720, II. 56-7.
[57] McInerney, 'Rhetoric Power and Integrity in the Passion of the Virgin Martyr', in *Menacing Virgins*, ed. by Kelly and Leslie, p. 113; Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 113.
[58] Conrad Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. M. Hadley (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), pp. 103-120, (p. 106). The idea of a substance crossing the boundaries of man's body against their will ties in with the idea of the woman's body as a 'leaky', uncontrollable vessel. For further details about this idea see these sections of this thesis: Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages', Chapter Two, 'The Female Body as Opened and Enclosed', Chapter Three, 'The Redemptive Flesh' and 'Recoding the Womb of the Mother Saint', for discussions on the female body as open and enclosed. These fears tie in with the idea of the sexed body being one fluid organism with gendered attributes as discourses written upon it.
[59] Jacqueline Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, pp. 9-22 (pp. 11-12).
[60] Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', p. 18.

nocturnal emissions, which moved from men's lecherous thoughts to the actions of demons.[61] Jerome's example of enduring temptation from demons in the desert, on top of being an allusion to Christ, demonstrates how these two schools of thought merged.

In his *Dialogus Miraculorum*, Caesarius of Heisterbach (c. 1180-1240) claimed that 'demons collect[ed] wasted seed, and from it fashion[ed] for themselves human bodies, both of men and women, in which they [became] tangible and visible to men'.[62] A common hagiographical trope is the male saint being tricked by a devil in female form. In the 'Life of St. Andrew', Andrew saved a bishop from the devil who appeared as a beautiful noblewoman who wanted to confess.[63] Aware of the bishop's admiration for the woman's beauty, the devil 'dive[d] his dart deeper into the bishop's heart, at the same time making the alluring face more and more beautiful'.[64] The phallic imagery of the dart echoes Jerome's definition of temptation as the 'fiery darts of lechery' inside him. Likewise, when St. Macarius is in the desert, he encountered a fiend who had possessed a dead man's body and, with a woman's voice, tried to incite him to bathe together. In response, Macarius beat his body and renounced the fiend.[65] In St. Benedict's life he is also tempted by the devil in the form of a black bird and a woman from his past. The woman aroused a memory in Benedict that caused him to nearly reject his faith. However, he quickly realised the error of his ways. The text reads:

[61] Dyan Elliott, 'Pollution, Illusion and Masculine Disarray. Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of the Clergy', in Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 14– 34.
[62] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. by H. von E. Scott and C. C. S. Bland, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1929), vol. 1, p. 129; vol. 2, p. 12. See also Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, p. 13; Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, pp. 30-33.
[63] 'St. Andrew', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 3-12 (p. 9, II. 232-238)
[64] Translation taken from 'St. Andrew', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 13-21 (p. 19). The *Gilte Legende* edition of the life reads: 'And the bishop entended gretly to her and beheld her stedfastely in the visage and mervailed gretly of her beauute, and as he byhelde her stedfastely anone he was hurte in his soule with fals desire. The fende that hadde hurte hym perceyued right well and beganne too encrese her beauute more and more, so that the bisshop was in that point to haue required her of synne yef he hadde had tyme and place.' See 'St. Andrew', *Gilte Legende*, p. 11, II. 276-282.
[65] 'St. Macarius', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 93-95 (p. 93, II. 7-8)

> He wailed and soured and dispoiled himself and threw his bodi among the breres and thornes, and ther he turned his naked bodi to and fro till he was all towounded, and thus the wounds of þe fleshe dede awaye the woundes of the mynde. And after this tyme ther growed neuer temptacion in his body.[66]

These male saints' decision to violently beat and wound their bodies in response to temptation demonstrates that the threat is internal. Although it may be the devil playing a trick upon them, the devil uses their nature against them, either using their memories or amplifying desires already inside them. Even if semen wasn't considered as the same polluting substance that women secreted, it still held the ability to attract corrupting forces and limit man's control over his own body.[67] The trope of the male saint retreating to the desert to separate themselves from worldly temptation also indicates that men were acutely aware of the flaws of their nature. Their hot and dry composition made them acutely susceptible to sexual desire.[68] Jerome's desire to protect his cold body from the 'fire of lechery' reflected a need to reverse his innate nature. This motif is also seen in Walter Daniel's life of Ailred of Rievaulx, who frequently immersed himself 'in icy cold water, [to] quench the heat in himself of every vice'.[69] Young men were considered particularly at risk of uncontrollable desires that occurred within their flesh. In his preaching, Alan of Lille warned that 'when you [men] are young, you come close to a raging fire more readily than a young woman.'[70] Likewise, in St. Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions* (c. 397-400AD), he described the age of puberty as a period of obscurity and uncontrollable passion.[71] Augustine used verbs such as effervescence, overcast,

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[66] 'St. Benedict', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 213-223 (p. 214, II. 39-43).
[67] Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, p. 13-14; Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, pp. 30-33.
[68] Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', p. 14; Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle Ages*, pp. 167-201.
[69] Walter Daniel, *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx*, trans. by Frederick Maurice Powicke (London: Thomas Nelson, 1950), p. 25.
[70] *Alan of Lille: The Art of Preaching*, trans. by Gillian R. Evans (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981), p. 35. This also illustrates how maidenhood was considered the ideal age for a woman, where she possessed all the positives attributes of femininity (youth, beauty, virginity), but not the negatives (sexual desire). For a discussion about maidenhood see Chapter Two in this thesis, 'The Interiority of a Virgin'.
[71] *St. Augustine's Confessions Volume 1*, ed. by G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 66.

obscured and muddy, to illustrate his lust as a fog that caused bewilderment and overpowered his youth. Male desire and the flesh are framed as uncontrollable and destructive.

Due to the understanding of male nature and genitalia as the root of sexual desire and temptation, castration became a metaphor to regain control. As castration was illegal, it cannot be considered a viable route offered to men. Still, theologians who had undergone the procedure did write about it, and the practice influenced their teaching. The monk John Cassian's (c. 360-435AD) doctrine centred on eradicating emissions through teaching men restraint via ascetic purity.[72] Scholars have read Peter Abelard's (c. 1079-1142) vast intellectual output after his castration as a successful 'remasculination'.[73] However, Peter Abelard saw his castration as a cleansing process in which he had cast the imperfect male body aside.[74] With non-ejaculation being biologically impossible, complete control over the body could only have been achieved through castration. This is likely why the words 'virginity' and 'chastity' are interchangeable when applied to men in a way that is not apparent for women.

For men, the term 'chastity' meant 'properly restrained' rather than entirely celibate. A man who only had sexual relations with his wife could be considered 'chaste', for this would be exercising an appropriate amount of control.[75] Virginity was, therefore, a state that women had to preserve, in contrast to a quality a man desired and could achieve via a difficult disciplinary agenda.[76] This gendered divide is why virginity is treated differently in male and

[72] Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Hadley, p. 113.
[73] Martine Irvine, 'Abelard and (Re)writing the Male Body: Castration, Identity and Remasculinization', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cohen and Wheeler, pp. 87-106; Bonnie Wheeler, 'Origenary Fantasies: Abelard's Castration and Confession', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cohen and Wheeler, pp. 107– 128.
[74] Murray, '"The Law of Sin that is in My Members": The Problem of Male Embodiment', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, p. 18.
[75] Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', p. 111. See Chapter Three for a discussion on medieval marriage.
[76] Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 47; Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Bernau, Salih, and Evans, p. 112; Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 44.

female hagiography. In the *Gilte Legende* lives of St. Alban and St. Francis, and the *Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal* (c. 1439) by John Lydgate, there is no mention of virginity or chastity.[77] From theological doctrine regarding the saints, we can assume all of them were chaste, seeing as the Franciscan tradition emphasises fasting, obedience, poverty and chastity.[78] While McInerney has stated that male virgins did not exist or were not represented in medieval hagiography, I argue that the themes of virginity and chastity are present but not as explicit as in the female lives.[79] In these male saints' lives, virginity and chastity are subtle themes that use Christological motifs to invoke scenes of temptation, control and sacrifice.

Male Virgin Martyrs

In looking at the narrative patterns of male chastity in hagiographies identified by Kathleen Coyne Kelly and John H. Arnold, age is an important factor in the representation of male virginity.[80] Of the male saints discussed in this chapter, St. Edmund is the only one that centres virginity in his narrative. As a saint, Edmund appealed to a variety of people, representing clerical ideals of holiness, such as chastity, in an image of royalty. Ecclesiastical reformers saw Edmund as an ideal representation of kingship, and the monarchy saw him as a legitimising link between Anglo-Saxon and post-conquest kingdoms and royal dynasties.[81] In Lydgate's *Lives of St. Edmund and Fremund* (c. 1433-1434), the text repeatedly referred to him as holding the triple crown of virgin, king and martyr, demonstrating this union of royalty and Christianity. Conceived through the grace of Christ, he is described as 'encreced in vertu, sobre

[77] The only mention of virginity in the St. Alban's Life is of the Virgin Mary when discussing Christ's genealogy. See *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, ed. by Westhuizen, pp. 129-132, II. 1163-1226.
[78] *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi*, ed. and trans. by Dom Roger Hudleston (New York: Start Publishing, 2012), p. 252; Franciscans Third Order, *Manual of the Third Order of St. Francis* (London: Burns and Lambert, 1855), p. 115.
[79] McInerney, 'Rhetoric Power and Integrity in the Passion of the Virgin Martyr', in *Menacing Virgins*, ed. by Kelly and Leslie, pp. 57-8.
[80] Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*; Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Bernau, Salih, and Evans, pp. 102-118.
[81] Rebecca Pinter, *The Cult of St. Edmund in East Anglia* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), p. 244.

of his chier, void of outrage, demeur of port, angelik of visage' and 'chaste of his life, bothe in deed and thouht'.[82] The description of Edmund as 'angelic in face' refers to his youth, which makes his virginity implicit with his age.

Defining life stages in a medieval context can be quite problematic due to the wide variety of opinions. In *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought,* J. A. Burrow analysed the theme in a wide variety of medieval discourse from sermons, didactic poetry, moral and political treatises, and medical handbooks. Influenced by classic Greek, Arabic and Roman traditions, age ranges were commonly divided into four to seven life stages.[83] In our modern understanding, we would consider a person's formative years to be the period of adolescence ranging from age thirteen to nineteen, but adolescence was sometimes linked with the period of childhood. The eleventh-century doctor Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (c. 980-1037) believed the first age lasted until the age of thirty. In contrast, Dante Alighieri's *Il Convivio* (c. 1304-1307) depicted childhood or the first age as *adolescenza,* which lasted until age twenty-five.[84] The twelfth-century Latin text *Tractatus de Quaternario* (Treatise on the Fours) linked the four ages of man with the four seasons, the four elements, the four regions of the world, the four divisions of the zodiac, the four principal winds and the four humours.[85] Each of these elements is connected to a specific age period, starting with the hot and moist first age and ending with the cold and dry last age. The *Tractatus de Quaternario* showed instability in its age range as the first age is variously considered to be between zero to fourteen, zero to twenty-five, and zero to thirty.[86] However, these age ranges did not consider social practices and roles that would propel young men to adult status. The social implications

[82] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, ed. by Bale and Edwards, pp. 42-43, II. 260-265, p. 44, II. 302.
[83] J. A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 51.
[84] Dante Alighieri, *Il Convivio, 4:24-25,* trans. by Richard H. Lansing (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1990), p. 218-28; Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 20-21.
[85] Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 20.
[86] Burrow, *The Ages of Man*., p. 20.

coincide with Elizabeth Badinter's argument that masculinity must be acquired, as it involved the crossing of a threshold, such as an initiation ceremony or ritual, that signified a boy becoming a man.[87]

In St. Edmund's case, through his miraculous conception, devoutness and being crowned at the young age of fifteen, he bypasses this stage of 'becoming a man' and the sexual connotations and dangers that accompany that through becoming Christ-like.[88] When he confronted Hyngwar before his martyrdom, he is described as standing 'affor the tirant, sittyng in his estat | Lyk as was Cryst whilom tofor Pilat'.[89] Edmund also significantly dies at age thirty, the same age Christ was at his passion: 'whan the holy martir was by acontis cleer, | Day of his passion. Of age thretty yeer.'[90] Kelly has argued that, while female virginity was investigated and had clear tropes of representation upon the body, male chastity was 'assayed'. By judging the male body based on quality, not its fundamental properties, it does not allow the body to become an endangered feminized object but preserves the subject-position and masculinity.[91] Edmund's virginity is, therefore, not what defines him as a saint, but an additional quality in his holiness.

The ideal ages of men and women in the medieval period are crucial to understanding how virginity functioned. Whereas young girls were expected to be chaste, modest, and incorruptible and celebrated as the 'ideal age' of femininity, boyhood was considered a liminal state in a man's life of naivety, incompletion, and consequently, a lack of free will. This period of a boy's life was not celebrated in hagiography, nor did it function in the same way as the virgin martyr narratives discussed in Chapter Two. Nonetheless, it is important to note how the boy martyr lives used the theme of virginity and Christological imagery. The boy martyrs were

[87] Elizabeth Badinter, *XY: On Masculine Identity*, trans. by Lydia Davis (New York, 1995), pp. 67-68.
[88] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 56, II. 774-777.
[89] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 81, II. 1698-1700.
[90] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 90, II. 2022-2023.
[91] Kelly, *Performing Virginity*, pp. 91-118; Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Bernau, Salih, and Evans, p. 104.

a small group of saints dated from the twelfth to sixteenth century that shared similar characteristics: they were all young boys, aged between three to sixteen; they were all murdered by members of the Jewish community; and all recognised as Christian martyrs.[92] The lives are blood-libels, which were anti-Semitic narratives that accused Jews of participating in the ritual sacrifice of Christians, in imitation of Christ's crucifixion. These libels predominantly demonstrate widespread hostility towards the Jewish community, but also how the Christ-child trope functioned in hagiography.[93] Whereas the female martyrs, who ranged from twelve to eighteen, were viewed as young women ready for marriage, the boy martyrs' youth and innocence were the focal points of reference.

The murder of William of Norwich, who died in 1144 at the age of twelve, was the first literary record of the blood libel narratives.[94] William was the nephew of the priest Godwin Sturt, who claimed William had been murdered in a Jewish ritual murder as an affront to Christ. Thomas of Monmouth published the story using local sources.[95] In Thomas of Monmouth's *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich* (c. 1149-1172), William is described repeatedly as a sheep led by wolves: 'the boy, like an innocent lamb, was led to the slaughter'.[96] Likewise, despite occurring 111 years after William's death, Matthew Paris's life on Young Hugh of Lincoln (c. 1247-1255) used a similar narrative pattern. O*f the cruel treatment of the Jews for having crucified a boy* narrated the account of an eight-year-old boy stolen by a group of Jews, who was tortured and murdered in the name of 'the false prophet Jesus'.[97] The

[92] Christopher Ocker, 'Ritual Murder and the Subjectivity of Christ: A Choice in Medieval Christianity', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 91, 2 (1998), 153-192 (p. 156)
[93] Ocker, 'Ritual Murder and the Subjectivity of Christ', p. 153.
[94] Diane Peters Auslander, 'Hugh of Lincoln', in *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phyllis G. Jestice, 3 vols (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004), p. 378; Emily M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[95] Ocker, 'Ritual Murder and the Subjectivity of Christ', p. 154
[96] *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth*, ed. and trans by Augustus Jessop and M. R. James (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 19.
[97] Matthew Paris, 'Version of the Story of Young Hugh of Lincoln 1255', *Cornell University* (2012) < http://prh3.arts.cornell.edu/310/texts/paris1255.htm> [accessed 20 January 2018].

allusions to Christ act as a reinforcement of Christianity for their communities and those reading their hagiographies. In referring to William as a 'sheep amongst wolves', he is aligned with the motif of the Christ child, the sacrificial lamb. The iconography of the Christ child emphasized Christ's purity, through the infantile innocence of a child's body, and foreshadowed his adult sacrifice, by placing him in a tomb or objects of the passion.[98] Christ as the 'Lamb of God' was a widespread medieval homiletic and iconographical motif that combined the innocent and sacrificial nature of the Christ child. However, it also played on anti-Semitic ideas of Jewish people as 'Christ-killers', due to the link of Christ as the sacrificial Passover lamb.[99] Therefore, the imagery of the sacrificial Christ child invited viewers to see allusions to Christ in the suffering and death of all children.[100] Unlike the virgin martyr narratives of Chapter Two, faith does not act as a gateway for William or Hugh to gain their voices against their oppressors. The references to Christ's body merely serve to convey the boy martyrs' youth and innocence to create compassion in the audience. The fact that neither William nor Hugh of Lincoln have direct speech further emphasizes their hagiographies' function; they are sacrificial vessels that are honoured not due to their actions but the circumstances of their deaths.

Geoffrey Chaucer's 'The Prioress's Tale' (c. 1387-1400), which narrated the story of a seven-year-old boy murdered by Jews, also used a lack of direct speech to demonstrate the innocence of its protagonist. Through his widowed mother, the young boy is greatly devoted to the Virgin Mary and shows this by learning the words to 'Gracious mother of the redeemer'

[98] Elina Gertsman, 'Signs of Death: The Sacrificial Christ Child in Late-Medieval Art', in *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha es et O!*, ed. by Mary Dzon and Theresa M. Kenney (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 66-91 (pp. 66-68).
[99] M. R. Wilson, 'Passover', in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, New and Revised edition, ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 4 vols (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), pp. 675-679.
[100] Elina Gertsman, 'Signs of Death: The Sacrificial Christ Child in Late-Medieval Art', p. 83. See Daniel T. Kline, 'Textuality, Subjectivity, and Violence: Theorizing the Figure of the Child in Middle English Literature', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 12 (1995), 23-38 (p. 24) for the connection between images of children suffering and high infant mortality.

in Latin off by heart, without knowing what the lyrics mean.[101] The song highlights the linguistic innocence and ignorance in the boy. This theme contrasts with how the female virgin martyr Saint Cecilie's voice is portrayed in 'The Second Nun's Tale': her bold, religiously charged speech firmly dictated her faith, converted others to Christianity, and dismissed paganism as ignorant foolishness.[102] Whereas the female martyrs are portrayed as educated, wise, and bold in their speech, speech in the male martyrs is used to represent youth and juvenile behaviours.

Likewise, in John Lydgate's poem 'O Blessed Robert innocent and virgin' (early 1500) Robert was described as 'a sowkyng child, tendre of innocence, so to be scourged and naylled to a tre'.[103] The verb 'sowkyng' refers to 'suckling', to feed from the breast or udder. This image implies Robert was still being nursed when he died. Therefore, his age would have been between birth to 24 months. The text stated that, although many might cry, Robert did not make a sound. However, this is not in the way the female virgin martyrs stand defiant against their oppressors and torturers. Robert makes no sound for he was 'with-oute langage' stating again how young he was when he died.[104]

In contrast to Bynum's analysis of male hagiographies as 'active dramas', there is no oppressing force, discord, or separation from public or family expectations or duties like the female martyrs.[105] The boy martyrs are passive. As Gavin Langmuir has commented, 'the central drama of the *Life* is not William's heroic holiness – indeed he plays a singularly passive role'.[106] The young male saints invoked Christ-child motifs to distinguish them as innocents and sacrificial martyrs and create an empathetic response from the reader. Unlike the female

[101] 'The Prioress' Prologue and Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Christopher Cannon, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 209-213, II. 508, 529.
[102] 'The Second Nun's Tale', *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 497-504.
[103] 'O Blessed Robert Innocent and Virgin', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, Extra Series 1867-1920 no. 107 (London: Early Text Society, 1910), pp. 138-139 (p. 138, II. 11-12).
[104] 'O Blessed Robert Innocent and Virgin', *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, p. 138, II. 14.
[105] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 38.
[106] Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder', *Speculum*, 59, 4 (1984), 820-846.

virgin martyrs, the audience was not interested in boy martyrs' actions, nor did they function as role models to young boys during their adolescent years. What mattered was their murder and the divine revelation of their killers. The boy martyrs served to explain mysterious child deaths and murders during the period, vilify Jews, and promote an anti-Semitic agenda in Christianity. Although the function of the boy martyr was not necessarily to encourage or celebrate virginity to a young male audience, it does demonstrate a key hagiography theme: the connection between virginity and sacrifice in the male saint.

In addition to age, Arnold identified four basic narrative patterns of virginity in male saints' lives that all centre on the theme of sacrifice: bodily chastisement to protect one's chastity, the direct exercise of will over the self, narratives of revelation, and overcoming temptations by physical intervention.[107] These narrative conventions are very similar to some female saints' lives, which focus on the preservation or reestablishment of virginity/chastity through bodily control and tests of will-power. In Chapter Two, the punishment the chosen selection of virgin martyrs experience due to their faith is targeted at the defilement of their virginal bodies. In Chapter Three, the chosen selection of mother saints take a vow of chastity after their husbands' deaths. It is only after they have completed their marital debt in producing offspring that they can devote themselves entirely to God. Likewise, in Chapter Four, the chosen selection of trans* saints avoid an arranged marriage or undergo penance for adultery by stripping themselves of female signifiers (hair, clothing) and joining monasteries. A majority of female saints denounce their families and experience hardships to separate themselves from the world. Their motifs of separation revolve around symbols of women's sexuality and maternity, to emphasise their departure from worldly pleasures and duty.[108] Whereas virginity is an overt theme in most female saints' lives, some male saints also use

[107] Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Bernau, Salih, and Evans, pp. 103-106.
[108] Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 283.

physical motifs of separation and preservation to demonstrate their denouncement of the world and dedication to God. In Bynum's analysis of Bonaventure's *The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* (c. 1263), she demonstrated how the life employed imagery of reversal and elevation by Francis's transition from a wealthy merchant, to a mother, to a founder, leader, and Father of his friars.[109] Bynum showed how men used dominant symbols of feminine piety, such as the roles of bride, mother, and virgin, to articulate their new religious roles in society.[110] Men adopted feminine attributes to strip themselves of their masculine status before regaining their authority in a religious setting.[111] I want to build on this analysis by suggesting that these dominant images are not only recognised as feminine, but see St. Francis imitate common roles of Christ. Francis's life follows a basic virgin martyr narrative structure which sees him renounce the world to become a bride of Christ and a foundational mother, transmitting the Word of God.

Samantha Riches has questioned how useful it is to assign saints to convenient gendered categories. The term 'virgin martyr' implies femininity and virginity, but the category can extend beyond gender.[112] Riches identified standard narrative techniques: a description of the saint that indicated ideas of moral and social nobility, a refusal to cooperate with the saint's antagonist which placed heretical belief and Christianity in opposition, and a trial of physical torture that often had sexualized overtones.[113] Riches presented evidence to include the knightly St. George as a virgin martyr, as his vitae borrowed signifiers of the female martyrs' virginity.[114] Likewise, Bonventure's vita of St. Francis also adopted the narrative motifs Riches acknowledged. The opening stanza centred around St. Francis's morality: he is a humble

[109] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 34-35.
[110] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 36.
[111] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35.
[112] Riches, 'St. George as a male virgin martyr' in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, pp. 65-85 (pp. 65-67).
[113] Riches, 'St. George as a male virgin martyr', pp. 66-7.
[114] Riches, 'St. George as a male virgin martyr', p. 70.

servant of God who has taken on voluntary poverty to shun 'ungodliness and worldly lust'.[115] Although he is not noble, Francis is the son of a wealthy merchant.[116] By following a religious life, he gave up wealth and status like a virgin martyr. Francis also underwent a public denouncement of the world in favour of Christianity. When Francis's father first discovered he had become a servant of God, he berated Francis, beat him and locked him in the family home.[117] His father's actions make Francis even more eager to continue on his path. During the second encounter with his father, Francis renounced his inheritance and all ties to his father. He stood naked in front of his father and spoke:

> Hitherto I have called thee my father on earth, but henceforth I can confidently say 'Our Father, Which art in heaven,' with Whom I have laid up my whole treasure, and on Whom I have set my whole trust and hope.[118]

The removal of his clothes and the denunciation of his biological father shows how Francis has stripped himself of his worldly identity. To show his new pious, humble identity, the monks dress Francis in the rough tunic of a farm servant. Francis's transition illustrates how his status and authority have altered but also emphasises sacrifice and morality. The text reads 'the servant of the Most High King was left despoiled, that he might follow the Lord […] who had been despoiled and crucified'.[119] Francis casting aside his possessions and worldly status is framed as an act of *imitatio Christi*, a role which continues throughout the text.

The third narrative theme from virgin martyrs' lives is physical torture and eventual martyrdom. This is implied metaphorically in St. Francis's life through his continued imitation

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[115] *The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Salter. Available online at: Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 1, para. 1).
[116] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 1).
[117] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 2, para. 2).
[118] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 2, para. 4).
[119] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 2, para. 4).

of Christ. As Bynum noted, during Francis's life crisis (renouncing his father and Francis's death) the text uses patterns of disease and suffering.[120] Francis lived with lepers, bathed their feet, bound their sores, removed pus from their wounds, wiped away blood and kissed their lesions.[121] The scene is alluding to Christ cleansing the leper as mentioned in the synoptic Gospels.[122] Francis's act is again framed as an imitation of Christ, but also one of sacrifice and devotion to others. However, lepers were a segregated class, and their disease was believed to be punishment for sins of the flesh.[123] By living with them, Francis partakes in their suffering and shares their tribulations. Likewise, Francis's martyrdom is a spiritual one that further unites him with Christ: his stigmata. Francis received the stigmata of Christ upon his flesh.[124] The text explains how 'the true love of Christ had transformed His lover into the same image'.[125] In Francis's spiritual martyrdom, he becomes both a bride of Christ and Christ-like: he occupies both the feminine and masculine roles simultaneously. This latter point frequently appears throughout Francis's hagiography. His transition from a soldier of Christ to labouring mother and finally leader of an Order is not linear in the narrative but dispersed throughout Francis's life. Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 9 refer to Francis as a solider of Christ. In chapters 3 and 8, Francis acts 'like a mother in Christ'.[126] Francis is also described as a leader in various ways through the hagiography: in the prologue and chapter 15 he is called a 'true leader' and 'the founder and leader'; in chapter 4 he is described as the 'shepherd of a little flock'; and in chapter 5 he

[120] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 35.
[121] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 2, para. 6, chap. 14, para. 1).
[122] Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16.
[123] Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell Press, 2006).
[124]Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 13, para. 3).
[125] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 13, para. 5).
[126] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 8, para. 1).

is the 'leader of the army of Christ'.[127] The non-linear transition between these roles suggest that these positions are not intended to emphasis Francis's gender but further align him with Christ. Even Francis's role as a mother, where he is described as conceiving and birthing the Gospel truth, acts as an additional narrative feature from the virgin martyr lives.[128]

Thomas Heffernan argued that the topos of transformation is an important theme in the lives of female virgins as they transition from virgin to bride to mother.[129] This transition emulated the complex iconography of the virgin Mary who became the bride and mother of God, whilst retaining her virginity. Likewise, Francis fulfilled his role as a mother through 'the merits of the Mother of Mercy (the Virgin Mary)'.[130] Whereas virgin martyrs' scenes of physical suffering are sexualised to emphasis their bodies as sacred vessels in need of protection, the chaste male body is consistently linked with Christ-like suffering and balance. This balance is not only achieved through the multiple gendered roles the male saint inhabited but is also humoral. As Francis explained, it is more 'tolerable for a spiritual man to bear intense cold in his body, than to feel the heat of carnal lust'.[131] To force this humoral change, Francis plunged himself into a ditch of snow whenever he was overwhelmed by the 'appetites of the body'.[132] Virginity is presented as an achievable spiritual and bodily condition that aids in a closer connection to Christ. In thinking about the gender implications, virginity has often been

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[127] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (prologue, para 1, chap. 15, para. 1, chap. 4, para. 5, chap. 5, para. 1).

[128] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 3, para. 1).

[129] Thomas Heffernan, 'Virgin Mothers', in Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, pp. 231-299. In relation to the virgin martyrs' transformation from virgin to bride to mother, Heffernan writes, 'Surely this transformation produces one of literature's most complex icons: the virgin becomes the bride of the God, and finally the mother of the God, while retaining her virginity. Her breasts as the symbol of her maternity are mutilated and finally severed, to underscore the miraculous metamorphosis of the virgin into a nurturing mother, virtually a deity in her own right.' (p. 283). See Chapter Two for a discussion on virgin martyrs.

[130] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 3, para. 1).

[131] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 5, para. 3).

[132] Saint Bonaventure, 'The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi', *e-Catholic 2000* (1999-2018) <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml> [accessed 5 January 2020] (chap. 5, para. 3-4).

interpreted as an asexual state or a third gender, separate from maleness or femaleness.[133] I do not entirely agree with this sentiment, as I believe it has lessened the importance of virginity and chastity for men. Reading St. Francis's life through a virgin martyr lens, we can identify hagiographical patterns important for male sanctity, such as sacrifice, suffering, and bodily control, that we usually associate with the feminine. Ultimately, these patterns act as dominant symbols to show their imitation of Christ. By invoking images of Christ's temptation and the sacrificial Christ-child, men were able to redefine what it meant to be a celibate man through their understanding of *imitatio Christi.*

Soldiers of Christ

The shift between secular and religious definitions of masculinity has led to several scholars questioning if medieval celibates could be recognised as fully male. Jo Ann McNamara has asked, 'can one be a man without deploying the most obvious biological attributes of manhood?'[134] McNamara argued that when the reformation of the Church prohibited sexual relations, the clergy underwent a crisis of masculinity.[135] Patricia Cullum developed this argument further by stating that monks could not be considered mature adults as they did not become heads of households or establishments but remained in subservient roles.[136] This theory was developed from R. W. Connell's concept of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, which recognised that the definition of masculinity varied across individuals, time, and culture. Hegemonic masculinity represented the prototype and dominant form of manhood that legitimised the hierarchal gender system and justified the subordination of women and

[133] Riches, 'St. George as a male virgin martyr', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, p. 71.
[134] Jo Ann McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System 1050-1140', in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. by Lees, Fenster and McNamara, pp. 3-30 (p. 5).
[135] McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*', p. 3.
[136] Patricia Cullum, 'Clergy, Masculinity and Transgression in Medieval England', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Hadley, pp. 178-196 (pp. 194-195).

marginalised models of masculinity.[137] However, as religion and the Church had a central role in medieval society, it does not seem useful to categorise religious masculinity as subordinate. R. N. Swanson argued that, to define their masculinity, men of the clergy became 'emasculine', a liminal state of gender between masculinity and femininity, or a 'third gender'.[138] Bynum similarly demonstrated how twelfth-century Cistercians saw the abbot as adopting a nurturing, maternal role.[139] Bynum clarified that the monks did not view the abbot as feminine; Cistercian writers employed feminine and masculine metaphors to present the abbot as representing the good qualities of both sexes.[140] The established scholarly responses identify a paradoxical and conflicting notion of masculinity in reaction to the Church's attempt to create a monolithic model of clerical masculinity. Jacqueline Murray identified this anxiety as the 'multiplicity of coexisting and competing visions of masculinity' that existed within medieval society.[141] The different behaviours expected in secular and religious orders produced contradictory and undermining notions of masculinity that illustrate medieval masculinity as not a fixed hegemonic ideal but a multitude of conflicting identities.

In contrast to previous scholarship that problematically classified groups as un-masculine or feminine based upon modern preconceptions and the gender criteria of other groups, recent scholarship has advocated an understanding of masculinity that is multiple and complex.[142] As Derek Neal has pointed out, clerics were not secluded from gender expectations as their status was dependent on them being biologically male.[143] Likewise, P. H. Cullum has analysed how parish clerks in thirteenth-century England viewed their own masculine identity.

[137] Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 23-158.
[138] Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation', *in Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Hadley, pp. 160-177.
[139] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110-160; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother', pp. 257-284
[140] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 166-169; Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother', p. 258.
[141] Murray, 'Introduction', in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities*, ed. by Murray, p. xi.
[142] Neal, 'What Can Historians Do With Clerical Masculinity', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, pp. 16-28 (p. 17).
[143] Neal, 'What Can Historians Do With Clerical Masculinity', p. 16.

Although they suffered from a more 'fragile' gender identity than that of the monastic clergy, clerks did not see themselves as emasculated. Cullum's research suggests that clerks did not see themselves as a third gender between masculinity and femininity but identified and redefined their masculinity with the laymen in their communities.[144] Therefore, the definition of medieval masculinity was a combination of two opposing forces that influenced and worked in conjunction with each other. As secular masculinity influenced the discourses of medieval Christianity, those motifs and expectations were reflected onto society. This can be seen in the discourse of spiritual warfare and the plights of the crusaders, who revised pious masculinity using military and chivalric language.

The language of spiritual warfare was heavily influenced by the Scriptures, the work of the Desert Fathers, hagiography, and the sixth-century *The Rule of Saint Benedict.*[145] These works saw warfare in allegorical terms: 'warfare was the calling of violent men whose relationship with the Church was fraught with tension'.[146] The monks regarded themselves as *milites Christi* or 'warriors of Christ' and traced their lineage back to the ancient Israelites, the martyrs of the early Church, and the Desert Fathers.[147] These early men of Christianity were pictured as the first great warriors of the Church with Christ as their commander. Monks saw themselves as direct heirs of these great Christian warriors with their abbot acting as Christ's earthly representative.[148] The incorporation of traditional masculinity with models of spirituality demonstrates how early Christianity attempted to appropriate masculinity for its

[144] Cullum, 'Clergy, Masculinity and Transgression in Medieval England', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Hadley, pp. 178-196.
[145] The Rule of Saint Benedict was a book of precepts written by Benedict of Nursia (c. AD 480-550) aimed at communal monks. Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 87.
[146] Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', p. 87.
[147] Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', p. 88.
[148] Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', pp. 90-91.

own requirements. A new form of masculinity was promoted that pictured clerical and monastic life as one of great virility and manliness.[149]

The unique language the clergy adopted was influenced by the specialized discourse used by monks when writing for, to, or about men like themselves.[150] Monks adapted motifs of warfare and crusading to redefine their masculinity from the social images they had forfeited when taking on the religious life. During the eleventh century, Cluniac monks imagined themselves as powerful warriors in their liturgy. Lester K. Little and Barbara Hanawalt noted that this was in reaction to the modifications on knighthood that required soldiers to undergo a period of penance and atonement after a battle.[151] By adopting the martial rhetoric of the military elite and lay communities, a hybrid model of manliness emerged. As the virtues of chastity, non-violent combat, and humility conflicted with the extravagant, arrogant, and violent secular knighthood, this rhetoric became adopted by a new crusader masculine identity.[152] Endorsed by the church, the warrior of the crusades (1095-1291) held a mixture of traditional warrior values, such as bravery, military skills, and clerical ideals such as devotion, humility and chastity.[153] Despite crusading being a temporary vocation, it involved a vow to be chaste throughout their service, whether they were married or unmarried.[154] The two opposing sectors of masculinity modified and adopted each other's defining images, creating a controlled, ritualized and Christianized model of knighthood.[155] Whereas previously, the knightly and clerical classes had held separate definitions of masculinity, the crusaders were

[149] For a discussion on the malleability of gender (in Judith Butler's terms, something than can be 'put on'), see Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. For an analysis on religious women 'becoming male' and 'virile' in their piety, see Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.
[150] Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 89.
[151] Lester K. Little and Barbara Hanawalt, 'Social Meaning in the Monastic and Mendicant Spiritualities', *Past and Present*, 63 (1974), 4-32 (p. 12).
[152] Andrew Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest: The Creation of a New Masculine Identity during the Crusades', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinities*, ed. by Thibodeaux, pp. 185-203 (p. 185).
[153] Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest', p. 186.
[154] Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest', p. 195.
[155] Little and Hanawalt, 'Social Meaning in the Monastic and Mendicant Spiritualities', p. 13, p. 15, p. 32.

viewed as warriors who, like the clergy, were in service under God.[156] Essentially, the crusades offered knights an opportunity for redemption and reformation, as the knight was a divided figurehead.[157] For the secular ideals of masculinity that championed sexual prowess and courage, the knight was the ultimate symbol.[158] However, for monks, the knight signified violence and disorder that threatened their property and way of life.[159]

Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1153) expressed in his treatise *Liber ad milites Templi: De laude novae militae* [Book for Temple Soldiers: Praise the new Campaign] (c. 1120-1136) a new admiration for the crusader model of knighthood. Bernard claimed that while waging war via spiritual strength was praiseworthy, it was not as remarkable as when a man equipped himself with both sword and belt. He called the crusaders 'truly fearless knight[s] [..] for [their] soul[s] [were] protected by the armour of faith just as [their] [bodies] [were] protected by armour of steel'.[160] In contrast, he criticized worldly knighthood for fighting with 'pomp', adorning their spurs with precious stones, and blinding themselves with effeminate locks. Bernard asked if these were the features of a warrior or a woman. Bernard summarised by stating when the temple knights entered battle, 'they arm[ed] themselves interiorly with faith and exteriorly with steel rather than decorate themselves with gold, since their business [was] to strike fear in the enemy rather than to incite his cupidity'.[161] Bernard equated 'real' masculinity with faith, chastity and austerity. The treatise demonstrates a revision of masculinity that aimed to diminish the controversies and anxieties associated with male

[156] Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinities*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 190.
[157] Natasha Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. by Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), pp. 195-212. (p. 197). Hodgson writes, 'Most historians agree that the crusade was designed at least in part to offer knights an avenue for reform – famously Guibert of Nogent saw it as a new solution for knights who were concerned about their salvation but unable to embrace monastic life' (p. 197).
[158] Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', p. 201.
[159] Katherine Allen Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armour: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050–1250', *Speculum*, 83 (2008), 572-602 (p. 573).
[160] Bernard of Clairvaux, 'In Praise of New Knighthood', trans. by Conrad Greenia, in *Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatise Three* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), pp. 127-145.
[161] Bernard of Clairvaux, 'In Praise of New Knighthood', p. 135.

celibacy. Bernard defamed the knightly class as effeminate failures, reversing the idea that faith and chastity were emasculating.

The uniting force within crusader and monastic ideals of masculinity was seeing their service as a defence of Christ and the Church.[162] Both groups of men went into battle for Christ, whether literally or metaphorically.[163] Under Christ's leadership, men were offered rewards for their service in the form of penance and the remission of their sins.[164] They saw their duty as an act of *imitatio Christi,* for the crusaders believed they were following in Christ's footsteps by liberating Eastern Christians and propagating the Word of God.[165] The theological implications were reflected in the oath the crusaders took to join the crusades, which was called 'taking the cross' [to follow Christ].[166] The motifs of spiritual warfare blended the conflict of the old testament with the pacifism of the early Church and New Testament.[167]

In a similar context to that of theological influence separating conflict and aggressive masculinity by justifying war in Christ's name, asceticism used martial rhetoric to create a form of masculinity based on self-control.[168] Martyred Roman saints like St. Sebastian formed part of a new cult of warrior-saints who provided models of male sanctity for the crusaders and knightly class to imitate.[169] St. Sebastian is described as bearing 'always the mantel of knyghthode to that ende that he myght comfort the soules of cristen that he seugh defaille in torments'.[170] Likewise, when St. Alban was led up the hill to his martyrdom, the text reads:

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[162] Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. by Hurlock and Oldfield, p. 198; Ane L. Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence: Spiritual Rewards and the Theology of the Crusades, c. 1095-1216* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 205-206.
[163] Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', p. 198; Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armour', p. 575. Smith refers to how monks saw daily mass as a battle.
[164] Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence*, p. 205.
[165] Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence*, pp. 205, 215.
[166] Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence*, pp. 215-216. The phrase 'taking the cross' is derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark. See Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence*, pp. 156-163.
[167] Bysted, *Crusade Indulgence*, p. 209.
[168] Tison Pugh, 'Queer Crusading, Military Masculinity, Allegories of Vietnam in *Lester's Robin and Marian*', in *Studies in Medievalism XIX: Defining Neomedievalism(s)*, ed. by Karl Fugelso (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 114-134 (p. 115); Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', p. 201.
[169] Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armour', p. 583.
[170] 'St. Sebastian', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 102-108 (p. 102, II. 5-6).

'this holy goddess knight is for to ende the cours of his bataile'.[171] St. Edmund was called 'Cristis champioun' when fighting the pagan Danes.[172] He was described as a lion among the pagan sheep: 'Among Sarseynes he pleied the lioun, | For they lik sheep fledde out of his syht', using his sword to shed pagan blood, 'of paynym blood ful grete plente he shadde [..] | the sharp swerd of Edmond turnyd red'.[173] It is also important to note that female *milities christi* existed, who also had to fight temptation and their own nature. Hildegard of Bingen imagined herself as a female warrior battling against injustice for the good of Christ.[174] The use of martial rhetoric was not to make up for a perceived deficiency in the monk's understanding of their masculinity but was 'a reflection of their confidence and commitment to a more dangerous battle than those fought on Earth'.[175] In examining the language of spiritual warfare in the 'Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln', Murray concluded that the integration of religious and masculine identity offered a new hero for a new age; one that could overcome the anxieties of a celibate model of masculinity that did not participate in warfare, by revisioning it as the ultimate battle against the self: 'A hero whose sexual prowess was reaffirmed by the temptations of the flesh and whose military prowess was demonstrated in the battle for chastity'.[176] The combination of martial rhetoric and spirituality reassured pious men that their faith did not degrade them to a third gender or effeminate them.[177]

The consistent rewriting and revising of masculinity demonstrate that men had anxieties about how they were perceived and their own nature. In the hagiography of Hugh of Avalon, he is said to have 'donned armour against the flesh, soldiered against himself, and himself

[171] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 107, II. 618-19.
[172] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 74, II. 1415.
[173] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 74, II. 1417-1418, p. 74, II. 1414, p. 74, II. 1423.
[174] Smith, 'Spiritual Warriors in Citadels of Faith', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 101.
[175] Thibodeaux, 'Introduction: Rethinking the Medieval Clergy and Masculinity', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 9.
[176] Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinising Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cullum and Lewis, pp. 24–43 (p. 37).
[177] Murray, 'Masculinising Religious Life', p. 37.

overcame himself, both conqueror and conquered in one and the same conflict'.[178] The language is highly evocative of chivalric codes of conduct and imagery of knighthood. However, Hugh's male body is also playing the role of both champion and enemy. The markers of masculinity show he has used his faith to overcome his nature; he is depicted as at war with himself. Hugh illustrates the complexity of how the medieval man was simultaneously supposed to be a pious Christian, warrior and father.

Motifs of masculinity intertwined and influenced each category of masculine identity. The correlation between a man and being the head of a household only holds one possible definition of masculinity, as does the clergy's correlation between manliness, celibacy and spirituality.[179] Therefore, masculinity is not monolithic, nor should we simplify certain groups or subcultures into third genders. Masculinity is best understood in terms of multiplicity, as modern scholarship notes. Ruth Mazo Karras concluded that medieval masculinity is not as straightforward as the depiction of the 'knight in shining armour' or the 'chivalric man' that embodied courage, physical strength, self-sacrifice and honour.[180] Whereas scholarship has determined that there was no monolithic medieval model of women and that femininity resisted simplistic definition, medieval masculinity has not experienced the same extent of analysis. As Karras argued, like the writings on medieval women, 'we cannot say that medieval texts as a corpus share any single model of masculinity'.[181] Due to the hierarchical nature of medieval society, few statements would have applied to all men. Analysing masculinity in a simplified way does not address the nuanced and various models of masculinity that the period consisted of but merely reduces masculinity to the opposite of femininity.[182] This latter point is especially

[178] *The Metrical Life of Saint Hugh of Lincoln: the Latin text with Introduction, translation, and notes*, ed. and trans. by Charles Garton (Lincoln: Honeywood Press, 1986), p. 15.
[179] Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest', in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinities*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 195.
[180] Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2003), p. 2.
[181] Karras, *From Boys to Men*, p. 3.
[182] Thibodeaux, 'Introduction: Rethinking the Medieval Clergy and Masculinity' in *Negotiating Clerical Masculinity*, ed. by Thibodeaux, p. 2.

poignant when discussing how male religious life entwined with masculine identity, as man's relationship with God always put him in a subordinate position. By judging masculinity through power and superiority in medieval society, man's relationship with Christ has been read as an appropriation of feminine imagery or an act of gendered reversal. I believe this analysis has led to religious masculinity being misunderstood as a process of feminization, when instead the image of Christ was appropriated as a multidimensional model of identification to legitimise the male body outside a secular setting.[183]

The King of Kings

From the twelfth century, the imitation of Christ was a central topic of thought and teachings.[184] Although Christ was the son of God, people were able to approach Christ through his humanity that was displayed through a multitude of recognisable roles.[185] Individuals were implored to 'imitate the Master like disciples, the Lord like slaves, [and] the King like soldiers'.[186] The main image of Christ during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was of an all-powerful king of heaven and triumphant military leader.[187] The language of *The Rule of Saint Benedict* showed how martial rhetoric and spirituality were blended to demonstrate how people participated in 'battle for the same King': Christ.[188] Therefore, the characterisation of Christ as king had authoritative and political implications. As previously discussed, celibate monks and the crusaders adopted a military lexicon to understand and discuss their imitation of Christ. Likewise, popes replicated Christ's human and sacerdotal nature in their roles.[189] In a similar

[183] The use of Christ's image to legitimise the female body is discussed in Chapter Two.
[184] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 184.
[185] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, pp. 166-167.
[186] 'Hugonis De S. Victore, Sermones Centum', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 177 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1879), pp. 1030-1034 (serm. 48), pp. 1098-1102 (serm. 64). Translation from Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 168, f. 151, p. 182, f. 243. In the sermon Christ is called a pastor, guard, merchant, soldier, exile, pilgrim, traveller, poor man, and a man.
[187] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, pp. 157, 160.
[188] *The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. by Timothy Fry (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), 61:10. Quoted in Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armour, pp. 135-138, f. 24.
[189] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 161.

trend, Christ's divinity was used as a royal model of *imitatio Christi* to authorise leaders.[190] Kings were appointed to their positions in imitation of Christ, as they also voluntarily accepted tribulations to bring glory to their subjects.[191] The iconography of the period emphasised Christ's role as the 'King of Kings', which in turn blended motifs of royalty and divinity.[192] In artistic representations, Christ is often depicted clad in imperial purple with a golden stole and crown, insignias of both priests and members of the nobility.[193] Likewise, kings were pictured crowned and on a throne holding the *globus cruciger*, the cross-bearing orb.[194] The orb was a sphere, which represented the world, with a cross above it and signified Christ's dominion over the Earth and his role as *Salvator Mundi* [Saviour of the World]. As a symbol of authority, the *globus cruciger* shows the interconnection between the Church and state during the medieval period. Since the early middle ages, monarchs and the ruling classes borrowed Christian insignia and motifs.[195] This appropriation was especially prevalent in clothing, which saw royal accoutrements borrowed from papal dress-codes and vice versa.[196] Emperors would wear pontifical shoes, a mitre under their crowns, and received a ring at their coronations which signified their rule as a symbolic marriage between the king and his people.[197] Likewise, popes embellished their papal tiaras with golden crowns and donned the imperial purple.[198]

In *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum* [The Four Books of Sentences] (c. 1150) Peter Lombard (c. 1096-1160) mentioned the symbolic nature of the crown in relation to holy orders.

[190] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, pp. 160, 162.
[191] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 160; Janet L. Nelson, 'Rulers and Government', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 3, c.900-c.1024*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 95-129.
[192] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 162.
[193] Marcia Ann Kupfer, *The Passion Story: From Visual Representation to Social Drama* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), p. 23.
[194] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 162.
[195] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 193.
[196] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 162.
[197] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 193; Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 237.
[198] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 193.

The tonsure was compared to a crown due to its circular form and its placement on the top of the head which freed the mind to contemplate upon God. Peter Lombard quoted 1 Peter 2:9 'you are the chosen people, a royal priesthood', which merged ideas of royalty, perfection, and the honour of religious service.[199] By intertwining motifs of spirituality and royalty, leaders were granted a higher notion of authority in their positions, which were bestowed on them by God's invention. Through the thirteen to fifteenth centuries, secular and spiritual power were considered parallel and derived directly from God.[200] This idea descended from the royal unctions in the Old Testament, which saw anointed priests, kings and prophets as models for the Christian life.[201] Whereas in the early middle ages it was believed bishops were the mediators of divine grace who anointed the king, the meaning of *gratia* altered. Initially meaning only favour, in the later middle ages *gratia* also referred to the 'supernatural grace' instilled in the king.[202] Although the objectives of the later middle ages shifted from an individual to a communal focus, hagiographies remained as a tool to elevate the status of individuals and align them with royalty and holiness.[203]

Jacobus of Voragine's *The Golden Legend* intertwined these motifs to elevate the status of individual saints. In 'Saint Fabian' the saint is in the city of Rome to see who the new Pope will be, when a white dove lands on his head. The people saw this as a sign from God, choosing Fabian as the supreme pontiff.[204] In the narrative of Saint Epimachus, his name is derived from

[199] 'P. Lombardi Magistri Sententiarum, Parisiensis Episcopi Opera Omnia', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 192 (Paris: [Garnier Fratres], 1855), p. 901 (Lib. VI, Dist. XXIV. a. 2). Also see Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274) commentary on the *Sentences*. Book IV, Distinction 24 'Sacrament of Holy Orders' discusses the necessarily steps and objects required to take the holy orders. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum Super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, ed. by Pierre Madonnet and Marie-Fabien Moos, 4 vols (Paris: [P. Lethielleux], 1927-1947), distinction 24. Available online at Thomas Aquinas, 'Commentary on Sentences IV, Distinction 24', *Aquinas Institute* (2017) <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Sent.IV.D23.Ex.5> [accessed 20 March 2018].
[200] Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought: 300-1450* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 146.
[201] Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought*, p. 55.
[202] Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought*, p. 55.
[203] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 193; C. Keene, *Saint Margaret: Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 15.
[204] 'St. Fabian', *The Golden Legend*, p. 96-97.

epi, meaning above, and *machin*, king.[205] The etymology of Saint Augustine's name holds an interesting crossover, for he was named *Augustinus* due to the excellence of Augustus: 'the emperor who excelled above all kings[:] in the same manner Augustine surpassed all doctors of the Church'.[206] In John Lydgate's *Lives of St. Edmund and Fremund* (c. 1433-1434), St. Edmund's virtue, holiness, and kingship are connected through his triple crown: 'blyssed Edmund, kyng martir and vyrgyne'.[207] Discourses of royalty and holiness are written on his body externally through stately insignias and internally through his bloodline.

Likewise, St. Edmund's conception is claimed as an instance of divine intervention. His parents, Alkmond and Siware, are compared to the biblical couple Abraham and Sarah, who God aided in conceiving their child, Isaac.[208] Upon travelling to Rome, King Alkmond was greeted by a holy woman who had a vision of a son 'shewith in his stremys gostly and deuyne' growing from his branch of the family tree. Upon returning home, Siware conceived a child 'thoruh Goddis grace [..] | of God prouidid, Emond was his name'.[209] The text distinguished Edmund's lineage from royal and holy descent even before gaining the crown of martyrdom. To further the characterization of Edmund as both royal and holy, Lydgate recalled how, after Abbot William asked him to translate St. Edmund's story, he went down on his knees to pray to the holy martyr, referring to him as 'O precious charboncle of martirs alle! | O heuenly gemme! Saphir of Stabilnesse!'.[210] Gemstones carried great significance in both a religious and social context. The Book of Revelation 21:19 describes how in New Jerusalem 'the foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone'.[211] The three gems the text highlights (sapphire, ruby and amethyst) are linked to St. Edmund's position

[205] 'St. Gordianus and St. Epimachus', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 308-309 (p. 308).
[206] 'St. Augustine', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 502-518 (p. 502).
[207] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 33, II. 1.
[208] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 41, II. 206.
[209] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 42, II. 229, II. 249, II. 252.
[210] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 39, II. 119-120.
[211] Revelation 21:19: namely, jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, sardonyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst, and pearl.

as a virgin, martyr and king.[212] Sapphires were considered stones of chastity worn by cardinals and bishops.[213] Socially, rubies were considered the most prized gemstone, which, along with their colour, linked them to suffering and martyrdom.[214] Finally, amethysts and the colour purple signify Edmund's royalty and majesty.

Edmund's representation of a 'heavenly gem' heightens and authorises his voice by depicting him as Christ-like, for Christ too was a king, virgin and martyr. It is also important to note that, biblically, the number three symbolises wholeness, perfection and unity.[215] St. Edmund's reflection of Christ as the virgin martyr king exemplifies the Christological body as the perfect model of imitation. Luce Irigaray has also theorised that the multiplicity of God has enabled man to define himself: 'By seeking out a male God, man has not set limits for himself: 'the father is not single. He is three [father, son, spirit]'.[216] The interconnected symbolic patterns of royalty and holiness aid in creating a lineage and authority that stems from antiquity with God/Christ as the forefather.

The lives of St. Alban most explicitly demonstrate the connection between descent and authority. As the first recorded British Christian martyr and English saint, St. Alban was venerated during pre-reformation England.[217] Alban's life was included in hagiographical collections such as the *South English Legendary*, the *Gilte Legende*, and William Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend*. John Lydgate was also commissioned to write *The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal* by John Whethamstede, the Abbot of St. Alban.[218] The plot

[212] James C. Taylor, *Symbolism in the Bible* (End Time Overcomers, 2014), google ebook, p. 132.
[213] George Frederick Kunz, *Rings for the Finger* (New York: Dover Publication Inc, 1974), p. 279.
[214] Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 291; Anthony Bale, *Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews, and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), p. 85.
[215] Taylor, *Symbolism in the Bible*, p. 132.
[216] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 63.
[217] William S. Walsh, *Curiosities of Popular Customs and of Rites, Ceremonies, Observances, and Miscellaneous Antiquities* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1925), p. 22.
[218] Martin Heale, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 94.

begins in 54-55BC during the Gallic Wars when Julius Caesar first invaded Britain. The text remembers the time 'of antiquity' when,

> Ouermaystred was Brutis Albion
> Bi Iulius swerd, remembrid in scripture.
> [..]
> Whan Cesar was put in possession,
> Rather by fors than any title or riht
> Ordeyned statutis in that region:
> And this was oon, that no maner with
> Shold in that lond receive the ordre of knyht,
> For worthynesse, for meede, nor favour,
> But bi the hondis of the Emperour.[219]

The narrative uses the story of Caesar and the Romans invading Britain to distinguish between men who have taken possession through force and men who succeed by merit, status and, most importantly, ancestry. Whereas the text referred to the Romans as men 'nat disposed of blood nor of natur', both Saint Amphibal and Saint Alban's descriptions revolved around their high social status and renown.[220] The text described St. Amphibal as,

> A Princis sone of Walis […]
> In whom ther was non errour founde in kynde:
> Bi disposicion nouht was left bihynde,
> [..]
> And for [he] was born of hih kynreede.[221]

Likewise, St. Alban is,

> A lordis sone, excellyng of beaute,
> [...]
> Callid Albanus, riht seemely of statur,
> To all virtue disposid bi natur,
> The seide Albon bi descent of lyne,
> Born to be gentil of condicion,

[219] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, pp. 89-90, II. 134-147.
[220] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 90, II. 150.
[221] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 94, II. 247-253.

Bi aspectis of grace which is divine,
Predestynat bi eleccion,
For to be called of this Region
Prothomartir, whan he the faith hath take,
And shedde his blood for Ihesu cristis sake.[222]

As princes' sons, both men are descendants of royalty, meaning they have inherited dispositions of the highest quality; they are flawless in character due to their high-born kindred. The noun 'kyne' referred to the 'natural constitution of a person', implying that these characteristics were innate and inherent qualities in St. Alban and St. Amphibal's makeup.[223] The noun can also refer to a clan, family, parentage or ancestry. This double meaning is intended, with the use of 'kynreede', meaning blood relation, and 'lyne', translating to lineage or descendants.[224] In building this shared bloodline and origin, St. Alban and St. Amphibaus are supported and validated via a patriarchal line and, in Alban's case, Christ. The passage states how he was instilled with God's virtue and predestined for a higher moral purpose since birth: he was selected by God to be the protomartyr of his region.[225]

Similarly, Lydgate's verse hagiography of the *Lives of St. Edmund & Fremund* exaggerated Henry VI's kingship through heralding the influence from heavenly, literary and historical leaders:

For thei conceyue in ther opynyoun,
How the holy martir which restith in that place
Shal to the kyng be ful protecciοun
Ageyn alle enmies, be vertu and grace,
And for his noblesse procure and purchace,

[222] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, pp. 94-95, II. 263-273.
[223] University of Michigan, 'kinde', *Middle English Compendium* (2020) <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED24248> [accessed 28 March 2018]. Later references will be under 'MED'.
[224] MED, 'kindred' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=orths&q1=kindre*&rgxp=constrained> [accessed 28 March 2018]; MED, 'line' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED25651> [accessed 28 March 2018].
[225] MED, 'eleccioun' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED13226> [accessed 28 March 2018].

For to rassemble, by tryumphal victory,
To his fadir most notable of memory

Hopyng ageynward the kyng shal for his sake
Been to that chirch difference and protectour,
And into his handis al her quarrel take,
To been ther sheeld and ther supportour,
Sithe he allone is their roial foundour
Them to releue ageyn al wordly shoures,
Lyk to toforn did his progenitoures.

And sithe the kyng in his roial estat
List be deuocioun of his benyuolence
With the holy martir to be confederat
As kyng with kyng bothe of gret excellence
For whiche the martir be heuenly premynence
To sixte Herry shall his grace dresse
To make him floure in tryumphal prowesse

Be influence he fro the heuene doun
Shal in knyhthod make him most marcial
Yiue him with Arthour noblesse and hih renoun
And with Charlemayn for to been egal
And he shall grante him in especial
With seint Edward to loue God and dreed
And with seint Lowis that was of his kynreede.[226]

The hagiography was commissioned by Abbot William Curteys to commemorate King Henry VI's stay at the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds.[227] This passage demonstrates how the text set up direct links between royalty, lineage and holiness by connecting Henry VI with St. Edmund. The first three stanzas combine the lexicon of spiritual warfare with kingship to ask Henry VI to continue to protect and favour the monastery church of Bury St. Edmunds. The text implied

[226] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 38, II. 79-105.
[227] Bale, Edwards, 'Introduction', *Lydgate's St. Edmund*, pp. 11-27.

it is Henry's moral, spiritual and family duty to be the church's 'shield and supporter'. Stanza four described Henry and St. Edmund as 'confederat', allied, both as kings of great excellence. Despite the text's affirmation of Edmund's superiority by referring to his heavenly pre-eminence, Henry is still 'dresse' [equipped] in his grace, which makes him flourish in triumphal prowess. Therefore, Henry VI's valour and excellence are not only bestowed upon him by 'roial blood', to use a phrase Lydgate applies to St. Edmund, but through heavenly influence.[228] The narrative of the male saint's body is imposed or 'dresse[d]' upon the earthly male body to elevate and legitimise. In addition to the saint's body, the text used a historical king, Charlemagne, and a literary king, Arthur, to boost Henry's authority and battle prowess. By including fictional men alongside factual figures, the man-made narrative that centres around a robust patriarchal lineage to maintain power is highlighted.

Lydgate isn't alone in his use of motifs that link royalty and holiness to create an unbroken patriarchal lineage. However, his tone and style are typically more verbose than others of the period. The *Gilte Legende's* anonymous 'Life of St. Albon' also began its narrative during Caesar's reign; however, the focus is on the introduction of paganism and the Roman Kingdom (pre-republic). The introductions of Alban and Amphibal described them as royalty held in high regard, but omit the possibility of Alban's holiness prior to his conversion to Christianity: 'amonge the whiche ther was a princes sone of Wales in gret arrate that hight Amphiball, a goodly yong man [...] also ther was […] a lordes sone of the citee of Verolamye,

[228] For readings on medieval ideas of kingship and how that interrelated with Lydgate's Lancastrian heritage see *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture and Lancastrian England*, ed. by Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Jennifer Sisk, 'Lydgate's Problematic Commission: A Legend of St. Edmund for Henry VI', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109, 3 (2020) 349-375; Mary C. Flannery, *John Lydgate and the Poetics of Fame* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013); Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Karen A. Winstead, 'John Lydgate's "Mumming at Windsor": Clothilda, Women's Steadfastness, and Lancastrian Rule', *The Chaucer Review*, 49, 2 (2014) 228-243; Stephen R. Reimer, 'A New Arion: Lydgate on Saints, Kings, and "Good Acord", *South Atlantic Review*, 79, 3-4 (2014), 144-155; John H. Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England, *PMLA*, 107, 5 (1992), 1168-1180; Nancy Bradley Warren, 'Liabilities and Assets: Holy Women in the Literary Economy', in *Spiritual Economics: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) p. 135.

a semely yonge man of body and wel avysed in his gouernaunce whiche was called Albon'.[229] Alban's superiority or potential is alluded to in a matter-of-fact tone but still included authorisation from a masculine authority. The text stated that Bassianus, the son of King Severus who ruled as Roman emperor from 193-211, held Alban in special regard above all others.[230] He also had a close relationship with Emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305AD) and ordained Alban as 'prince of knyghtes thorugh all Bretaigne and stewarde of the same ile'.[231] The text is littered with men of royal descent and military rank: from Cassivellanus, the British tribal chief who led the defence against Caesar in 54 BC and Pope Zephyrinus, the Bishop of Rome from 199-217 to Marcus Aurelius Mausaeus Valerius Carausius, the military commander of the Roman Empire in 286-293 and his treasurer Allectus, Julius Asclepoiodotus, the Roman praetorian prefect and consul in 292, and finally Maximinus Thrax, the Roman Emperor from 235-238. Mentioning the names of these men created a vast timeline of patriarchal lineage, authority and power spanning hundreds of years.

Unlike Lydgate's text, Alban is vain in his beliefs, referring to Amphibal as a 'mad man' when they discussed Christ and God. Amphibal only recognized Alban's potential after Alban experienced a divine vision of a man being crucified on a cross and rising from the dead.[232] Amphibal informed Alban that the man tormented on the cross was Christ, 'the whiche denyed not to obeye hymselff to the torment […] for he wold deliuer us by his blood [fro] the gilte that we were streytely holden inne bi the defauute of oure furste fader'.[233] The reference to the first father (Adam), continues the theme of an unbroken male line stemming from creation. On hearing Amphibal's words, Alban announced his faith and dedication to Christ and asked 'tell me, I praie the now that knowest alle, what longithe to me to do to the fader and

[229] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende,* pp. 376-408, II. 30-35.
[230] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende,* p. 379, II. 87-89.
[231] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende,* p. 380, II. 119-120.
[232] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende,* pp. 383-384, II. 220-260.
[233] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende,* pp. 384-385, II. 264-267.

[what] to the holy gost. How shall I neygh to the seruise of the sone?'[234] The use of the nouns 'father' and 'son' in relation to God ties in with the overarching motif of patriarchy and paterfamilias. Rachel Moss has commented, 'late medieval society is saturated with images of the father that go beyond the household: God the father, the king as father to his people, a priest as father to his congregation. 'Father' is a potent term with socio-political resonance in many contexts'.[235] In using terminology like 'Father' and 'son', the text created a social and political circular notion of authority that is based on a masculine image. For as God is considered both 'father' and 'son, there are several instances where the text and God refer to these male saints using the same terminology.

The *South English Legendary's* 'Life of St. Dominic' stated that a 'heiȝ man [the bishop] made him [St. Dominic] sone: and chanun seculer [a member of the clergy living outside canon rule]'.[236] In St. Dominic's first vision, Christ referred to him as 'mi sone', which was also repeated in Christ's dialogue with St. Francis where the Lord said 'mi sone [..] lo mi chaumpiun and his felawe: þat schullen þis dede do'.[237] The *Gilte Legende's* version of St. Dominic's life also frequently referred to him as 'noble fader' and 'holy fader'.[238] The reference to Dominic and Francis as 'fathers' and 'sons' alluded to their role as founders of religious orders. St. Dominic was a Catholic priest and the founder of the Dominican order.[239] This masculine terminology that bases itself on male relations exhibits the understanding that Alban's and Edmund's *vitae* also addressed that 'god hath made [man] lik to his ymage'.[240]

[234] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende*, p. 385, II. 291-294.
[235] Rachel E. Moss, *Fatherhood and its Representations in Middle English Texts* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013), p. 7.
[236] St. Domenic', *The Early South-English Legendary or Lives of Saints: Ms. Laud, 108, in the Bodleian Library*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, EETS, Original Series no. 87 (London: Published for the Early Text Society by N. Trübner & co, 1887), pp. 278-288, (p. 279, II. 31).
[237] 'St. Domenic', *The Early South-English Legendary*, p. 281, II. 121-8.
[238] 'St. Albon', *Gilte Legende*, p. 384, II. 248.
[239] Donald J. Goergen, *St. Dominic: The Story of a Preaching Friar* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2016).
[240] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 182, II. 2425. The noun 'man' in Old and Middle English translates to the universal term of 'mankind' or 'human' being. For a full terminology breakdown see 'man', in *Merriam-Webster New Book of World Histories* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1991), p. 290.

These concepts of royalty and divinity interplayed amongst a theme of male lineage recalls Irigaray's theory about male subjectivity and identification. Irigaray argued that, 'man [was] able to exist because God helpe[d] him to define his gender, helpe[d] him orient his finiteness by reference to infinity'.[241] Whereas women's identity was left fractured and dictated by a masculine narrative, men have acquired the means to dictate their subjectivity and history via the power of the divine.[242] By implementing a patrilineal history and the divine made in a masculine image, these male saints' finiteness as men, whom by nature must die, has been redefined and reoriented by the implication of infinity. Thus, the texts show how men can appropriate and redefine what is considered a 'masculine' trait or attribute. I argue that the borrowing of these motifs is a reaction to male fear and anxiety. As we have seen in the *milites Christi* and crusader narratives, opposing factions of masculinity reunited under the guise of Christianity to redefine masculinity in pious terms. In a similar manner to how the celibate man became reimagined as a chaste warrior under Christ, the insignias of royalty and lineage served to re-establish pious men within a patriarchal world of authority dependent on heirs. Religious masculinity repeatedly used the image of Christ to legitimise and reflect their Christian values onto the secular world, which in turn redefined secular masculinity. Christ acted as the ultimate figurehead of masculinity that allowed men to legitimise their bodies outside a secular definition of masculinity that aligned them with the feminine. For Christ enacted both gendered positions: the hyperbolically masculine all-powerful divine ruler and the feminised humble, compassionate, suffering human.

[241] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61.
[242] Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p. 68; Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 59-61.

Martyrs: The Perfect Imitators of Christ

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Christ's humanity became a central concern, creating a new model to follow, which reflected on Christ's humility, compassion, and most importantly, his suffering.[243] Imitating Christ's suffering remained a prominent theological image throughout the late middle ages. The thirteenth century saw sculptures and paintings evoke religious participation, through affective piety, visions and mystical experiences. Iconography 'made Christ come down to the level of the faithful'.[244] Religious art was less focused on Christ as an all-powerful king and more as a man who endured human suffering. Likewise, Thomas à Kempis's (c. 1380-1471) *De Imitatione Christi* [The Imitation of Christ] (c. 1418-1427) acted as a guidebook to a successful Christian life, highlighting the purpose of suffering in the name of Christ. The end stanza of book 2, 'Suggestions Drawing One Towards the Inner Life', read:

> If there had been anything better, anything more suited or more useful to our salvation than suffering, Christ surely would have pointed it out to us by his word and example. For the disciples who followed him and for all those who wish to follow him, he clearly urges carrying the cross, saying: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." So, let all your reading and studying end on this note: to enter the Kingdom of God, we must endure many hardships.[245]

The text urged its audience to consider participation in the suffering that Christ experienced on the cross as the ultimate way to reach salvation. The final line underlined that the only way to access Heaven is by actively suffering numerous adversities during a lifetime. Saints were equally celebrated for the extent of their sufferings. Dorothy of Montau's canonization proceedings stated that her self-mortification was due to becoming the 'perfect imitator of Christ in intense sufferings, since it is more perfect to imitate Christ in sufferings than in

[243] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 170.
[244] Henri Focillon, *Art d'Occident: Le Moyen Age Roman et Gothique*, 2nd edn, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1947), p. 212. Quoted in Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 221.
[245] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ: A New Reading of the 1441 Latin Autograph Manuscript*, ed. and trans. by William C. Creasy (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2007), p. 51.

actions'.[246] Likewise, the iconography and literature of St. Francis of Assisi centred on his life of extreme poverty and suffering through the stigmata.[247] Francis's perfect imitation of Christ saw him imagined as the *alter Christus*, the second Christ. As the Franciscan author of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* [Meditations on the Life of Christ] (c. 1300) explained, through Francis's virtues, he became 'almost one' with Christ.[248] He was 'transformed into Him' after he received the sacred stigmata.[249]

Receiving stigmata was considered a sign of sanctity due to its association as a type of martyrdom.[250] In particular, the Dominicans considered martyrdom a superior form of stigmata.[251] Medieval ideas on martyrdom were centred on Christ and his crucifixion: a Christian martyr suffered like Christ and was considered his perfect imitator.[252] St. Edmund referred to his martyrdom as his 'passion'.[253] St. Alban spoke of his martyrdom as a blood sacrifice made to the Lord: 'Lorde, with all myn hearte y offer my soule to the in verrey sacrifice, and y | desire to be made thi witnesse be shedinge of blood'.[254] The crucifixion is also alluded to during the martyrs' death. St. Alban was led up a hill, wounded with broken bones, dying the earth red with his blood.[255] On the hill, he was bound to a stake and beheaded.[256] St.

[246] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, pp. 226-228, f. 452.
[247] Lester K. Little, 'Imitatio Francisci: The Influence of Francis of Assisi on Late Medieval Religious Life', in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, ed. by Michael Cusato and Guy Geltner (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 195-218; Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *The Poverty of Riches: St. Francis of Assisi Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Henk Van Os, 'Saint Francis as a Second Christ in Early Italian Painting', *Simiolus*, 7 (1974), 115-132.
[248] *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. R. B. Green and I. Ragusa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 3. Quoted in Lester K Little, 'Imitatio Francisci: The Influence of Francis of Assisi on Late Medieval Religious Life', p. 195.
[249] *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. 3.
[250] Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 73. See Chapter One 'Bearing the Stigmata: The Emergence of a Religious Ideal', pp. 23-59, which discusses how the concept of stigmata as a form of martyrdom has roots in Pauline stigmata.
[251] The Dominicans' consideration of martyrdom as a superior form of stigmata was likely to challenge the Franciscans' claim of superiority due to St. Francis of Assisi's stigmata. See Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 73.
[252] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 148; Danna Piroyansky, *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 6.
[253] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 85, II. 1845.
[254] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende*, p. 390, II. 438-440, *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 192, II. 2647.
[255] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 192, II. 2641-2650.
[256] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 198, 2775-80.

Edmund was also led, bloodied and beaten, to a tree where he was bound, shot with arrows, and beheaded.[257] As imitators of Christ's passion, martyrs were held in high regard. Throughout Lydgate's lives of St. Alban and St. Edmund, the saints are referred to as 'Goddis owne knyht', 'Cristis champion', 'Cristes owne knyht'.[258] Likewise, during Edmund's martyrdom, he is imagined as taking his rightful place in heaven as one of Christ's disciples:

> Blessid martirs with crownes laureate
> Cleyme hih in heuene to regne in ther stat.
> […]
> In heue bi grace they cleyme to haue an hoom,
> Folwyng the traces of Crist that is ther hed,
> Which like a geant descendid from Edoom,
> And hadde in Bosra his clothis died red,
> Which feedith his knyhtes with sacryd wyn and bred,
> Set at his table in the heuenly mansion,
> That drank the chalis heer of his passion.[259]

The passage used images of royalty and holiness to associate martyrdom with a triumphant battle in which the martyr goes on to claim their rightful place in heaven. As the text later stated, the martyr gained a new heavenly body 'al clad in purpil hew'.[260] The passage paraphrased Isaiah 63:1 from the Old Testament, which predominantly painted the Lord as a vengeful leader of war.[261] With Christ as the martyrs' head, he acts as their guiding principle and military leader, to follow into battle.[262] The image of martyrs sitting at a table consuming

[257] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, pp. 83-94, II. 1780-1805.
[258] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*. A list of the multiple names by which Edmund is referred to and the page numbers: Blessed Edmund/King: 46, 49, 50, Holy, 53, 56, 57, 58, 78, 81, 87 Gods own knight: 63, 79, 80, 88, Christ's champion: 74, Christ's knight: 74, 83, 86, Holy King: 74 God's champion: 83 Proud knight: 80, true knight: 85, king, martyr, virgin: 86. *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*. A list of the multiple names by which Alban is referred to and the page numbers: Holy martyr: 4, 82, 92, 354, 525, Proto-martyr: 7, 272, knightly high nobleness: 525, knight: 1061 knight and martyr: 1261, prince: 1290, god's own knight: 1371, blessed man: 729: blessed knight: 695, martyr: 648.
[259] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 84, II. 1805-1820.
[260] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 83, II. 1763-1764.
[261] Isiah 63. The opening of Isaiah 63 narrates Christ's sacrifice and resurrection as a victory against his enemies.
[262] Esther Cohen, 'The Meaning of the Head in High Medieval Culture', in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Barbara Baert, Anita Traninger and Catrien Santing (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 59-76.

wine and bread recalls the Last Supper, thus elevating them as disciples at Christ's side. The scene also evoked the Eucharist that further highlights a recurrent theme in the martyr lives of being connected to Christ through their shared bloodshed.

In her analysis of bloodshed in medieval literature, Peggy McCracken noted how gendered cultural values were imprinted onto blood.[263] As discussed further in Chapters Two and Three, female blood was considered a pollutant due to its links with menstruation and the 'curse of Eve'.[264] In contrast, heroic public bloodshed was associated with male blood, which had salvific properties.[265] Lydgate's vita of St. Alban demonstrates the connection between bloodshed and military duty by describing the martyr's colours as achieving the highest order of knightly nobility.[266] Wearing the red mantle was a reminder that a knight 'shulde nat drede for to spende theyr blode | For comon profite vpon any partie | By profession of theyr chiualrie'.[267] Likewise, Christ's blood is referred to as the price he paid to gain victory.[268] The text is also frequently reminded of the salvific nature of bloodshed through Christ's passion:

> Adam eete of bi fals suggestion
> Of a serpent, to gret confusin
> First of humsilf, next of all his lyne,
> Till Cristis passion was out cheef medicyne
>
> Ageyn Adam the serpent was so wood,
> To stanche his venym was fonde non obstacle,
> Til oon the crs Christ Ihesu spent his blood,
> As medicyne, Bawe, & cheeff triacle,
> Licour of licours distillying bi miracle
> Fro the condictis oof Critis woundis. V.,

[263] Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. ix.
[264] McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, pp. 1-22.
[265] McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, pp. 6-7.
[266] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 104, II. 525.
[267] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 104, II. 526-530.
[268] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 145, II. 1550.

Man to restore ageyn frm deth to live.[269]

The text poignantly described Original Sin as Adam's fault, not Eve's. Through Adam's deed, he polluted not only himself but his entire bloodline. It is only through Christ's wounds that man was saved from the sins of the Fall. Christ's sacrifice is described using medicinal terminology, which refers to his blood at the ultimate salvific remedy. St. Edmund's vita also referred to Christ's blood as washing away Adam's sins.[270] The text also noted the origin of Christ's blood. When Amphibal told St. Alban the story of Christ's conception, he explained that an angel sent a message that 'a branche shold spryng out of Iesse' in the form of the son of God born from the 'flesh and blood of a pur virgyne'.[271] The reference to the Jesse tree alluded to the genealogy of Christ and highlighted a major part in Christ's human conception: the Virgin Mary.[272] In matrilineal principles, blood is the connecting force between mother and child as it is the medium of exchange between mother and foetus. The maternal uterine blood formed the foetus, which was given life through the seed of the food, then fed by the blood of the womb and breasts.[273] Bynum stated 'the blood from which the individual is constituted is gendered female; the body is the mother's blood'.[274] Therefore, the 'lambys blood' that washed 'off adamys synne [and] the rest' is the shared blood of Christ and Mary.[275]

The Shared Flesh

The Virgin Mary's pure and virtuous bodily nature earned her the right to become the Mother of God. Bernardino of Siena (c. 1380-1444) referred to Mary as the 'Saints of Saints' to

[269] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban,* p. 143, II. 1496-1506.
[270] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 33, II. 17-18.
[271] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban,* pp. 129-131, II. 1147-1220
[272] MED, 'jesse' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED23843> [accessed 29 March 2018].
[273] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 158.
[274] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 158.
[275] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund*, p. 33, II. 17-18.

emphasis her high-ranking position.[276] In her womb, which was called the 'tabernacle of God, the throne of God, [and] the dwelling of God', Christ took on her flesh, uniting his divine and human nature.[277] In the Council of Chalcedon's (451) discussions of Christ's dual nature, the Gospel of John's pronouncement of the Word becoming flesh does not mean a changing of the Word's nature but an announcement of Christ's humanity.[278] 'It denoted that the Son, maintaining the integrity of his full divinity, came to exist as man, maintaining the integrity of his full humanity'.[279] Regarding Christ's hypostatic union, that decreed him both divine and human in union, Mary's body is a vital part of his humanity. In Mary's body 'the Word became flesh' which allowed Christ to '[dwell] among us'.[280] Mary is the source of Christ's human body, which we saw throughout the middle ages in Eucharistic representations and iconographical art.[281] Mary holds a vital part in Christ's existence on Earth and his sacrifice, which is highlighted in their mirrored roles.

As previously discussed, in *The Life of Saint Alban*, Lydgate alluded to Christ's role as the second Adam, whose blood cured Adam's sins. Likewise, Mary is seen as the mirror image of Eve: as Eve brought about death to the world, Mary brought life.[282] Lydgate used the motif

[276] Quote and translation from Steven J. McMichael, 'The Virgin Mary is Taken to the Throne of God: The Assumption of Mary in the Sermons of Bernardino da Siena' in *Medieval Franciscan Approaches to the Virgin Mary: Mater Sanctissima, Misericordia, et Dolorosa*, ed. by Steven J. McMichael and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 366-392 (p. 383). From Saint Bernardine of Siena, *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by Campion Murray (Phoenix: Tau Publishing, 2013), p. 224.
[277] Quote and translation from McMichael, 'The Virgin Mary is Taken to the Throne of God: The Assumption of Mary in the Sermons of Bernardino da Siena', p. 383. *Eleven sermons on the blessed Virgin Mary*, [p]. 224.
[278] 'Session 1: 8 October 451', in *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. and trans. by Price and Gaddis, pp. 111-365 (pp. 175-176).
[279] Thomas G. Weinandy, 'The Hypostatic Union: Personhood, Consciousness, and Knowledge', *Nova et Vetera*, 17, 2 (2019), 401-423 (pp. 402-033).
[280] John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
[281] Kristen Van Ausdall, 'Art and Eucharist in the Late Middle Ages', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ian Levy, Gary Macy and Kristen Van Ausdall (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 541-613 (p. 553). For a detailed discussion on the medieval representation of the Virgin Mary see Chapter Two, 'The Virgin Mary as Mother, Bride, and Lover' and 'Devotion to the Shared Flesh', in this thesis.
[282] For a further discussion on the parallel between Eve and Mary see Chapters Two, 'Removal of the Constructed Flesh' and 'Devotion to the Shared Flesh, and Chapter Three, 'The Redemptive Flesh' and 'Recording the Womb of the Mother Saint'.

of fruit to illustrate the parallels between Adam/Christ and Eve/Mary.[283] The text explained how man first strayed from God when Adam ate the fruit from the serpent, but became reunited again through 'the heauenly frute dyvyne, | which that sprang out of a pur virgyne'.[284] The text played upon Eucharistic imagery by referring to Christ as the 'fruit of frutis, our cheeff repast & foode' and his 'precious blood' as the salvific price of victory.[285] The sacrificial body of Christ acts as a maternal body: as Christ's body was formed and nourished through Mary, so does Christ's blood and body nurture and reform Christianity. In Christ's death all his roles become joined in union: he is the sacrificial mother, the royal champion and king clad in purple, the lamb who slayed the lion and overcame the wolf with his meekness.[286] Through Christ's and Mary's shared flesh, masculine and feminine traits are united into one body.

By looking at Christ's body as shared flesh, motifs and patterns typically deemed as male saints donning feminine attributes can be interpreted as shared Mariological and Christological symbols. The etymology of St. Alban's name highlighted this duality:

> This name Albanus, bi interpretacion,
> Compounyd is of plente and whitnesse:
> Plente he had in hih perfeccion
> And white also with lillies of clennesse,
> With Rosis meynt stable in ther rednesse:
> It was weel sene that he stable stood
> For cristes feith, whan paynymes shed his blood.
>
> Which too colours did neuer fade
> Off thes lillies and of thes rosis rede
> In blissed Albon, but euer aliche [glade:]
> White in his Baptem the lillies did sprede,
> The Rosis splayed whan he did shede

[283] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 145, II. 1533-1534: bi a rounde appil was caused al this losse, Bi frute reformed that heng vpon a crosse.
[284] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 145, II. 1535-1539.
[285] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 145, II. 1540-1541, 1539-1555.
[286] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 146, II. 1557-1569.

His purpurat blood, sparid for no deth,
The storm abidyng tyl he yald vp the breth

Thus was his chaplet made of red and white
Whit for his clennesse, I have so told aforn:
To chese the red he had also delit,
Whan fro the chaff was triede whete corn
In the holy martir, that hath the bront born:
Greyn of this frument was this man Albon[287]

The imagery played on tropes of all Christ's roles, from the royal king and the innocent child to the suffering human. The stanza copied tropes of courtly romance by lamenting Alban's perfect lily-white skin and rose-red blood. The symbolism behind the lily predates Christianity but since its inclusion in the *Song of Songs*, it has been seen as a motif of the Virgin Mary and chastity since the second century.[288] Once viewed as an old fertility symbol, combined with Marian purity it became a symbol of the Annunciation.[289] This duality is reflected in Alban's description where he is described as 'plente', meaning plentiful and abundant, and 'whitness', 'perfeccion', and 'clennesse', which all allude to purity and being free of sin.[290] Writers and artists in the middle ages tended to alternate between the lily and the rose in their symbolic portrayals of the virgin, with the rose signifying her love and position as the 'Mother of God'.[291] The rose has a wide range of classical associations from beauty, love, fertility, spring and death. In Roman and Greek mythology, deities of love were often associated with the rose. From the

[287] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 87, II. 64-83.
[288] Song of Songs 2; Teresa McLean, *Medieval English Gardens* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1980), p. 127.
[289] Teresa McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p. 127.
[290] MED, 'plente' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED33692>; MED, 'whitnesse' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED52633> [accessed 29 March 2018]; MED, 'perfeccioun' < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=orths&q1=perfecci*&rgxp=constrained> [accessed 29 March 2018]; MED, 'clennesse' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=orths&q1=clennesse*&rgxp=constrained> [accessed 29 March 2018].
[291] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p. 129.

Romans linking the rose with Venus, two connections lasted into a medieval Christianized form: the rose as a motif for the God of love and the blood of a divine victim or martyr.[292]

As the ultimate martyr, Jesus Christ has a double association with the rose, being the child of the Marian rose and the supreme rose of martyrdom. Paulinus of Nola (c. 354-431AD) referred to Christ as the *sol æquitatis, fons bonorum, flos dei* [sun of justice, fount of good, flower of God] and represented his crown of thorns as the thorns from a rose bush and his five bleeding wounds as the five petals of the rose.[293] The passage used colour to associate St. Alban's purity, holiness and royalty with recognisable Christological images that also mimic Christ's life cycle. White represented Alban's baptism and linked him with the dual motifs of the Christ child: innocence and sacrifice. Red roses symbolised the shedding of Alban's blood during his martyrdom and Christ's sacrifice.[294] The description of his blood as 'purple' alluded to his royalty and Christ's position as the King of Heaven.[295] As previously discussed, the theme of lineage is prominent in the text, therefore, the mention of Alban's purple blood of martyrdom in a passage with several allusions to Christ and the Virgin highlights his holy descent. Just as Christ took on the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, so has St. Alban's flesh and blood been reborn and revitalised through his baptism and martyrdom.

The joined motifs of Mary and Christ demonstrate how the gendered cultural views that aligned the feminine with the flesh and the masculine with the divine spirit became united in their shared flesh.[296] The shared flesh displays a utopic ideal of perfect humoral balance that could be achieved by following Christianity. As discussed in the Introduction, humoral theory was key in biological understandings of the body in the middle ages.[297] Male and female

[292] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p.128.
[293] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p. 129.
[294] Madeleine Peiner Cosman, Linda Gale Jones, 'Christian Clothing', in *Handbook to Life in the Medieval World*, 3 vols (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), pp. 826-834 (p. 827); John Gage, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 70.
[295] Gage, *Colour and Meaning*, pp. 71-75.
[296] Estella Antoaneta Ciobanu, *The Spectacle of the Body in Late Medieval England* (Iași: Lumen, 2012), p. 79.
[297] See the Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages'.

attributes were aligned with their humoral make-up: men were hot and dry, which made them dominant, whilst women were cold and moist, which made them submissive.[298] In treating sickness and disease, the ultimate goal was to achieve humoral balance within the body, which was dependent on physical and spiritual well-being.[299] The latter point tied in with Church teachings that sickness and disease was the direct result of Original Sin.[300] As the shared flesh was devoid of Original Sin, Christ and the Virgin Mary occupied human bodies in perfect humoral balance, with their blood as the ultimate medicine with which to atone for one's sins.[301] Overcoming a great sickness is a recurrent theme in hagiography. In the *Gilte Legende's vita* of St. Francis, he is described as being changed by the Lord into a new man after recovering from his illness and converting to Christianity.[302] Likewise, St. Bernard of Clairvaux experienced ill health in his youth but was cured after a vision of the Christ child.[303] The body of Christ as a remedy for spiritual and physical disease is also highlighted in the sacrament of the Eucharist, which imagined Christ's body as '*medicina sacramentalis*' [holy medicine].[304]

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[298] Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 12-17, pp. 184-5; Prioreschi, *Medieval Medicine*, p. 213; Whitney, *Medieval Science and Technology*, p. 96.

[299] Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 13-14. David Harley, 'Rhetoric and the Social Construction of Sickness', *Social History of Medicine*, 12 (1990), 407-435 (p. 416).

[300] Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', pp. 13-14; Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, 'Heavenly Vision and Psychosomatic Healing: Medical Discourse in Mecthild of Hackeborn's *The Booke of Gostlye Grace'*, in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 67-84 (pp. 71-72); Dyan Elliott, *Proving Women: Female spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later middle Ages* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 204.

[301] Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', p. 13; 'Augustine of Hippo, The City of God (Book X)', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Philip Schaff, trans. by Marcus Dods, vol. 2 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887). Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: Augustine of Hippo, 'The city of God (Book X)', *New Advent* (2020) <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120110.htm> [accessed 10 October 2020] (Chap. 3, Chap. 27). Mary and Christ having humoral balanced bodies was a theme that continued into the Early Modern period. In the *History of the Life and Excellencies of Our Lady the Virgin Mary*, Carmelite José de Jesú María (1562-1629) described Mary's complexion as without blemish and the perfect colour because her body was in perfect balance with the four humors. See Trevor Johnson, 'Mary in Early Modern Europe', in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. by Sarah Jane Boss (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), pp. 363-384 (p. 368).

[302] 'St. Francis', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 729-744 (p. 720, II. 3-5). And oure Lorde corrected hym by beting of syknesse and changed hym soddenly in another man, so that he beganne for to shine by sperit of prophecie.

[303] 'St. Bernard', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 593-606 (p. 594, II. 23-39).

[304] Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England*, p. 339. The combination of Eucharistic and medicinal motifs, which connect sin and disease, illustrates the concept of *Christus Medicus* (or Christ the Physician) and the Virgin Mary as *Maria medica*. For more information on these concepts see Diane Watt, 'Mary the Physician: Women, Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 27-44; Roberta Magnani, 'Chaucer's Physicians: Raising Questions of Authority', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 45-64; Yoshikawa, 'Heavenly Vision and Psychosomatic

Therefore, Mary's blood, which formed Christ's body and united his humanity and divinity, is a vital component in the veneration and imitation of Christ. The shared flesh provided both humoral harmony, by re-connecting flesh and spirit, masculine and feminine, and acted as a pathway towards redemption.

As previously discussed, the environment in which a saint was placed during their hagiography held significance for their gendered composition and redeeming their natures to achieve balance. Many male saints underwent temptations in the desert, as it reflected their own hot and dry humoral nature. The key to overcoming one's innate nature, to unite the flesh and the body, was piety and humoral balance. Alban's actions and martyrdom continually illustrated a gendered union, even in the environment around him. In Lydgate's verse, when St. Alban is imprisoned for his beliefs, the elements and nature around him begin to withdraw:

> Vpon the erthe on herbe, gras, or flour,
> All this tyme was no dewe Iseene,
> The grounde to cherish cam nothir reyn nor shour,
> Nor no moistour fil vpon the greene,
> Flora slept that is of floures queene,
> Elous the smyth, with his wyndis soft,
> Al this while enspired nat aloft.
>
> The erthe scalded with feverence of the sonne,
> Heete on nyhtis was intollerable,
> Ther grew no frute, the schyes wer al donne,
> Greyn cam not vp, lond was nat arrable,
> Thus bi a man[er] compleynt lamentable,
> Heuen and erthe compleynedyn of riht

Healing: Medical Discourse in Mecthild of Hackeborn's *The Booke of Gostlye Grace'*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 67-84; Takami Matsuda, ''Purgatory and Spiritual Healing in John Audelay's Poems', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa. pp. 123-138; Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, 'Mysticism and Medicine: Holy Communion in the Vita of Marie d'Oignies and The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Poetica*, 72, Special Issue, Convergence/Divergence: The Politics and Late Medieval English Devotional and Medical Discourses, ed. by Denis Renevey and Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa (Tokyo: Yushodo Press, 2009), 109–122; Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa,'Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul: Henry of Lancaster and Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines', *Medical History*, 53, 3 (2009), 397–414.

> The gret inurie doon to goddis knyht.[305]

The imagery presented a land left barren and devoid of all vitality due to the misdeed done to 'God's knight' Alban. With Flora, the goddess of nature, and Eolus, the keeper of the winds, asleep 'her londis brought forth no greyn, | The benefetis withdrawen of natur'.[306] The verb 'withdrawen' makes it appear like a punishment. With the heat of the land making it intolerable, no fruit or grain can grow in the soil, and the skies descend into darkness. As the effect extended from the earth to the skies, the people are being punished by Heaven and Earth. Whereas the people judge this as an act of sorcery, the elements are described as awaiting Christ's knight.[307] Upon seeing the people of the land near death, Alban prayed to God for help. While Lydgate's narrative called upon the Lord, Zephirus, Moses and the heavenly empire to refresh the people, in the *Gilte Legende*, Alban directed his speech to God alone:

> 'Lorde', he saide, that madest man of erthe, I beseche the suffer not thi creatoures in any wise to perisshe in [my] case. The eyre, blessed Lorde, make it tempre and sende plente of waters, the wynde beg[y]nne to blowe more fresshely, and that this thruste and hete that this people is laboured withe by thi mercifull yefte be sone restreyned.' And in the mene tyme that he praied in this wise, soddenly ther sprange up a well atte his fete and the peple stondinge al about. A merueilous virtu of Crist! The erthe was gretly brent with the sonne, and yet fro the coppe of the hille and fro the poudry erthe a colde welle sprang vp anone, flowing al aboute with large stremes rennynge doune to þe lowest partie of the hill. Than rannen the peple to the water and drunken and were gretly refreshed, and thus bi the merites of this holy man al her [thrustes] were quenched, but yet for al this they thrested continually mannes blode.[308]

[305] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, pp. 169-170, II. 2130-2143; 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende*, p. 390, II. 446-451.
[306] Kathleen N. Daly, *Greek and Roman Mythology A to Z*, rev. by Marian Rengel, 3rd edn. (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), p. 51; *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 176, II. 2278-2279.
[307] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 170, II. 2144-2147.
[308] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 396-397, II. 627-641.

Like Lydgate's *Life of St. Alban*, the saint called upon the Lord to correct the 'gret brennynge' sun that scolds the Earth and its people. Alban begins by affirming he does not want the people of the town to perish due to his deeds. This act reflects Christ dying for the sins of all people: through this act of atonement 'our sins are washed away and we are made clean'.[309] The passage alludes to this metaphor through Alban's call for God to nourish the Earth and the people with water. The vocabulary ties into water as a symbol for purification and change with the references to quenching the peoples' thirst and being restrained by this merciful gift. It also plays upon the gendered notion of humoral theory: that excess leads to suffering and sickness. Alban's call for water signifies a call for restoration and balance. Christ's love is often associated with a 'burning heat'. In the *Gilte Legende*'s 'Life of St. Francis', when Francis received a vision to rebuild the church of St. Damian, his soul was described as 'al moltyd' with the passion of Jesus Christ.[310] However, Christ's body, grace and passion are often described in feminine humoral terminology as moist, watery and leaking.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c. 1207-1282) aptly described the transmission of God's grace upon Earth through the martyrdom of His son by writing 'the crown was produced on earth at a great cost –not with gold, nor with silver, nor with jewels; rather, with human toil, with human tears, sweat, and blood, with all the virtues and, finally, with painful death'.[311] As noted previously, suffering and affective piety were considered the main narrative themes in the hagiographies of women.[312] Women mystics and saints often identified with the suffering body of Christ, as they saw their own bleeding, porous feminine bodies reflected to them and legitimised.[313] In Julian of Norwich's (c. 1343-1416) *Revelations of Divine Love* (c. 1413),

[309] NLV Hebrews 10:10-12.
[310] 'St. Francis', *Gilte Legende*, p. 730, II. 31-2.
[311] *Mechthild of Magdeburg The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. by Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), p. 273.
[312] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 27-52; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 23, 25; Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 371-380.
[313] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 217; Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe*, p. 98; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 289; Elizabeth Robertson, 'Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality in the *Ancrene Wisse* and Julian of Norwich's *Showings*', in *Feminist Approaches to the*

Julian recounted a vision of Christ on the cross she experienced whilst ravaged with sickness. She explained how she no longer felt her pain, only Christ's. Julian described this shared pain as a 'grett onyng', in which everyone can experience: 'when he was in payne, we ware in payne. And all creatures that myght suffer payne sufferyd with hym'.[314] As previously mentioned, suffering as Christ did was a vital step in the salvation for all Christians. Universally, Christ's body on the cross, that bled and suffered, offered a human image of sacrifice and suffering with which one could identify. However, I also argue that Christ's passion acted as a veneration of the shared flesh. It calls on Christians to share and feel Christ's pain as one's own, as Mary did. The image offers a pathway to redemption through humoral unity of masculine and feminine attributes. The theme of unity is shown in St. Alban's text when he witnessed the townspeople swallowed by an uncontrollable river. The text reads,

> He kneled downe and left vp his [eyen] to heuene and dressed his mynde to Crist and said: 'Lorde Ihesu Crist, of whos most holy side I beheld bothe blode and water come oute, I beseche the that this water may be lassed and that the flode withdrawe so that alle this peple mow be with me atte my passion.' A wonder thinge, as Albon bowed downe his knee the water was anone dried up, the whiles Seint Albonde shed oute teres ther lefte no water in the riuere. His orison drewe up the virtue of the riuere and shewed a way to the peple.[315]

The imagery in the passage links Alban's tears and emotive piety with Christ's crucifixion and blood. Alban seeks 'to medle his weepyng with Christis owen blood'.[316] The blood of Christ is, as previously stated, a potent metaphor for salvation and redemption and it is apt this occurs in the text when Alban is being led to his martyrdom.[317] In John 19:34 the apostle stated that blood and water flowed from Christ's side when the soldier's spear pierced him, with water

Body in Medieval Literature, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 142-167 (pp. 148-149).

[314] *The Showings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Denise Baker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company; Critical Edition, 2004), pp. 28, 30.

[315] 'St. Alban', *Gilte Legende*, p. 394, II. 572-579

[316] *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 150, 1664.

[317] McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, pp. ix, 102.

being understood to symbolise the Holy Spirit.[318] The blood shed by Christ symbolises the shared passion between himself and his mother.[319] The imagery of St. Alban's martyrdom that entwines blood and water alludes to the union of Christ and Mary. Through this shared bloodline, Alban now imitates perfect Christianity, which is not starkly gendered, but fluid and marked by humoral balance, not excess. The notion of balance is a repeated theme in male hagiography: male saints are encouraged to act 'in pes lik lambes, in were like leouns'.[320]

This notion of balance imitated by the shared body of Christ and Mary is explicitly apparent in the 'Life of St. Dominic' and his vision of Christ and the three lances. The passage demonstrates that the Virgin as intercessor should not be considered in such a reductionist role, but rather vital in Christ's gendered characterisation.

> He sawe in a night Ihesu Crist in the eyre and .iij. Speris braundisshinge ayeinst the worlde. And hys blessed moder ranne hastely ayeinst hym and asked what he wolde do. And he said: 'Alle the worlde is full of [.iij. vices], of pride, of luxurie, and of auarice. And therefor I will dystroye her with these thre speres.' And thanne the blessed Virgine fell downe to his fete and sayd: 'Dere sone, haue pitee and attempre thi rightwisenesse with thi mercy.' And Ihesu Crist saide: 'See ye not, moder, how many injuries thei do me?' And she saide: 'Sone, attempre thi w[r]atthe and abyde a while I have a true seruaunt and a noble fighter that shalle renne ouer alle and wynne the worlde and putte it fully vnder thi lordshippe. And I shall geue hym another seruaunt in helpe that shalle fight with hym.' And the sone sayde: 'I am apesed and receyue thi prayer, but I wolde knowe hym that ye wolde send in so gret an office.' And thane she presented to hym Seint Domenik. And Ihesu Crist said: 'Verrely this is a good and a noble champion and he shall do full curiously that ye haue saide'. And thanne she offered hym Seint Faunceys and he praysed hym as he dede the furst.[321]

[318] John 19:34: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
[319] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 2; Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 95.
[320] *John Lydgate's Lives of St. Edmund,* p. 54, II. 705-6, *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban*, p. 104, II. 515.
[321] 'St. Dominic', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 538-546 (p. 542, II. 153-170).

In the passage, the Virgin conforms to her intercessory role as a woman. She presents St. Dominic and St. Francis to Christ for them to fight on his behalf. The passage reflects the image of Mary and Christ as co-redeemers, with equally important roles in Christian salvation. Albert the Great (c. 1199-1280) explained how Mary took on the role of Queen of Mercy to moderate Christ's role as King of Justice.[322] Richard of St. Laurent (d. c. 1250) played upon the biological understanding that virtue was bestowed by one's mother by stating that the 'Virgin crown[ed] Christ with the crown of mercy because he was born with it from her'.[323] As in the extract, Christ is presented as a hypermasculine figure who is only interested in violence and vengeance, the Virgin acts as a calming voice, bestowing Christ with the properties he then passes on to both St. Dominic and St. Francis: humility, moderation and charity. Through her emotive piety and tears, Christ receives compassion from her: her gendered feminine 'moisture' balances his masculine-coded 'heated' anger.

In humoral theory, the body could become out of balance when a particular humour became corrupted from too little or too much stimulation.[324] The notion of excess had associations with effeminacy and homosexual desire.[325] This latter point is vital in our understanding in how definitions of medieval masculinity adapted and appropriated the image of Christ to redefine what it meant to be a man. The shared flesh of Christ and Mary united cultural attributes of masculinity (the spirit/divinity, virility, courage) with characteristics of femininity (the flesh/humanity, humility, meekness) in perfect humoral harmony. Therefore, the Virgin Mary's role in the Incarnation and Salvation is fundamental to the image of Christ

[322] *B. Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, ed. by E. C. A. Borgnet, vol. 36 (Paris: Apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1898), p. 345. I am unable to access this text due to the pandemic. Quote and translation from Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis*, p. 99, f. 73.
[323] *De laudibus beatae Mariae Virginis* was attributed to Albert the Great and can be found in B. *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, pp. 343-350. The text has been attributed to Richard of St. Laurent since 1625. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 266. I have been unable to access the text due to the pandemic. Quote and translation from Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis*, p. 99, f. 73.
[324] Winston Black, *The Middle Ages: Facts and Fictions* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2019), p. 180.
[325] David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 111.

as a universal figure of imitation. By appropriating the multiple images and representations of Christ, male religious identity was not seen as a problematic third gender or associated with effeminacy but became a legitimate form of masculinity. The feminised yet balanced body of Christ bestowed authority upon religious men, which not only allowed them to redefine their own masculine identities but also influence secular masculinity.

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In analysing the hagiographies of these male saints against the discord and anxieties that came from masculinity intersecting with religious life, it is clear that multiple images of Christ were used to redefine what it meant to be a man. The image of the Christ-child projected virginal purity and foreshadowed adult sacrifice. The celibate man alluded to Christ's temptation in the desert to demonstrate how to achieve humoral balance through restraint and virginity as an achievable bodily and spiritual condition. The language of spiritual warfare linked secular and religious definitions of masculinity into a Christianized mode of knighthood. Monks and crusader knights were seen as virile warriors fighting the same battle under Christ's command. The iconography of Christ as the King of Kings legitimised the interconnection between the state and Church. The blending of royal and papal insignias and dress-codes legitimised kings under God and established pious men's superiority within a patriarchal world of authority dependent on heirs. Finally, the image of the human suffering Christ offered a pathway to redemption. The feminisation of Christ on the cross, his bleeding, opened body, implicitly references the importance of Mary's role in salvation. In their roles as co-redeemers, Mary and Christ offered a model of perfect humoral balance, moderation, masculinity and femininity, united within their shared flesh. By reading Christ as a single point of reference or all male saints as using motifs of gendered reversal does a disservice to a gendered understanding of the late medieval period and the importance of the Virgin Mary in devotion. Although I do not

believe men saw themselves as adopting feminine traits, imitating Christ had to be a universally gendered pathway. Due to the cultural understandings of the body in the medieval period, the female flesh (which was associated with sickness and sin) offered a perfect tool with which to understand how the body could be redeemed through Christianity. Chapter Two will analyse how a selection of virgin martyrs imitate the shared flesh of the Christ and the Virgin Mary in their characterisation.

Chapter 2

'I shall no more be called the deuel ys doughter': Reading the Virgin Martyr through the Shared Flesh of Christ and the Virgin Mary

> Cristine toke an handful of her flesshe and threw it to her fader and saide: 'Holde, thou tyraunt, and ete the flesshe that þou hast gote'.[1]

Introduction

In Chapter One, we established that male saints' lives acted as 'social dramas' playing upon the disruptions, adjustments, and reintegration of 'active heroes'. However, female saints' lives are often dismissed as restrictive, with women merely acting as vessels or intercessory figures of divine intervention.[2] This reading resonates with Irigaray's essay 'Divine Women', which claimed that a lack of a gendered identification point or 'female God' had resulted in women being unable to form a self-narrative.[3] As figures on the borders between humanity and divinity, women's images and identities were left for men to construct.[4] Biological and theological discourse placed the female body in intercessory roles and aligned it with the flesh as opposed to the spirit. However, the late middle ages saw a rise in devotion directed at Christ's humanity. Medieval women's devotion to the body of Christ was an important outlet for their ability to express piety while being excluded from public modes of devotion, such as preaching.[5] The image of a bleeding and lactating Christ was a powerful tool of identification that aligned women's bodies with Christ's humanity.[6] This chapter challenges past representations of the virgin martyr as a passive receptacle of God's Word by examining the theological background of the fifteenth century that saw Christ's humanity as a pathway to female devotion. I assess the virgin martyr narratives of St. Lucy, St. Agnes, St. Agatha, St.

[1] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 483-486, (p. 484, II. 48-49).
[2] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 25; Helene Scheck, *Reform and Resistance: Formations of Female Subjectivity in Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008), p. 103.
[3] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61.
[4] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 59-61.
[5] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 217.
[6] Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe*, p. 98; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 289.

Margaret, St. Cecilia, St. Catherine and St. Christina, mainly from the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438) and vernacular prose retellings of their lives.[7] The chapter investigates the themes of voice, body, and the flesh. In particular, I look at responses to female preaching and virginity in the late middle ages and how the figures of Christ and Mary aided in legitimising the female body.

How to make a Virgin Martyr

Medieval scholarship has examined the virgin martyr saint to a great extent. Karen Winstead's research traced the evolution of the virgin martyr hagiography during the late middle ages.[8] Eamon Duffy and Kim Phillips have investigated the virgin martyr as models of imitation for both men and women.[9] Gail Ashton examined the relationship between the voice of the virgin martyr and the hagiographer.[10] Simon Gaunt, Kathryn Gravdal, and Robert Mills have focused on how torture inflicted on the female saint's body is read and understood.[11] Caroline Walker Bynum's scholarship determined that female hagiography is more likely to centre about women's struggle against temptation or the flesh.[12] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's research deemed virginity to be a paradoxical, monstrous condition, defined equally by its existence as its absence.[13] Helene Scheck has argued that the central theme of virginity limits female saints to

[7] For the majority of the lives, I have used *Gilte Legende*, ed. by Hamer. For a varied examination I also analysed the *Stanzaic Life of Katherine* (c. 1400) from Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 175/96, which is the only surviving manuscript that offers the complete text. I quote the edited version included in 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames. I also analyse William Paris's *Life of St. Christina* (1397-1399) from the British Library MS Arundel 168. An edited version of this can be found in Reames' collection of *Middle English Legends of Women Saints.*

[8] Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*.

[9] Eamon Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes: the Cult of Women Saints in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 27 (1990) 175-96; Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*.

[10] Gail Ashton, *Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

[11] Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Robert Mills, *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure, and Punishment in Medieval Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005); Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[12] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 29.

[13] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-c.1300: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The virgin's tale', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 165-194; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Chaste bodies: frames and experiences', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Kay and Rubin, pp. 24-42; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, '"Clerc u

mere vessels of divine power, whereas male saints act independently and are rewarded for their actions.[14] This chapter examines virgin martyr narratives with these themes of virginity, voice, the flesh, and bodily violence in mind to challenge the reading of the virgin martyr as a passive 'divine vessel'.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Caroline Walker Bynum argued that saints' lives conform to a conventional pattern. Male hagiographies became 'social dramas' that used images of gendered reversal, whereas women's stories focused on personal experiences of suffering and inner spirituality.[15] Women's lives are characterised by 'continuity rather than change'.[16] While male saints' lives included accounts of dramatic events with several crises or turning points in the narrative, women's stories centred on how they dealt with familiar experiences that could be promoted as exemplary models of behaviour for a Christian audience.[17]

André Vauchez has also concluded that female hagiographies used formulaic narratives that typically centred around unwanted marriages, chastity, and family discord.[18] The lives of virgin martyrs, such as St. Lucy, St. Agnes, St. Agatha, St. Margaret, St. Cecilia and St. Catherine, adhere to this structure. Their lives begin with a relatable situation, such as a young

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lai, muine u dame": women and Anglo-Norman hagiography in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 61-85; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message: Some Post-Conquest Accounts of Hagiographical Textual Transmission', in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission*, ed. by Minnis, pp. 39-54; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' lives and the female reader', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37 (1991), 314-322.

[14] Helene Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, p. 103.

[15] Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality', in *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 27-52. Also see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 23, p. 25; Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories About Them', *On Narrative*, ed. by Mitchell, p. 231-232. See Chapter One, 'The Saint in Medieval Hagiography', for an explanation of Bynum and Turner's theory in relation to the male saint. To summarise, Bynum based her argument on Turner's theory of liminality, which suggested that an individual undergoing a transition goes through three phases: separation, where an individual detached themselves from the established order; marginality where the individual became ambiguous or 'liminal' between two states; and reaggregation where the individual re-entered society, often at a higher status. Bynum argued that, while male saints' lives conformed to this theory by using images of gendered reversal, female hagiographies did not. Women's stories focus on continuity, rather than change.

[16] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 25.

[17] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 25-28.

[18] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 371-380. For a further discussion of Vauchez's theory see Chapter Three, 'Motherhood and Mariology in the Late Middle Ages', in this thesis.

virgin who refuses marriage despite societal or familial pressures. The only exception is St. Christina, who is locked in a tower by her father to worship his false idols. In her case, marriage is not part of the narrative, but family discord is nonetheless a key theme. Each saint publicly declares themselves a Christian and they then undergo a series of bodily tortures, which frequently entail the defilement of their virginal bodies. However, these virgin martyrs remain unscathed while undergoing these tortures until they are beheaded or suffer a spear to the throat.

The same recurrent motifs of royalty and spiritual warfare are present in the lives of virgin martyrs as in the lives of the male saints examined in Chapter One.[19] St. Catherine is described as being in 'grete conflict and bataile' while attempting to protect her virginity.[20] Likewise, St. Lucy and St. Cecilia's lives framed their dedication to Christ and their bodily purity as their 'corone[s] of chastite'.[21] The 'Life of St. Cecilia' in the *Gilte Legende* pushed this further, using a metaphor of 'ij. Crownes of roses and lelyes' that Cecilia and her husband Valerian received from the Lord for not corrupting their bodies through sexual intercourse.[22] The image of roses and lilies hold a double meaning of martyrdom and purity. The *Gilte Legende's* 'Life of St. Albon' and John Lydgate's *The Life of St. Alban and Saint Amphibal* and *Lives of St. Edmund & Fremund* also used the motifs of the lily and the rose. As in Chapter One, these motifs are used to mirror Christological and Mariological characteristics in the saints. The lily stood as a symbol of virtue and represented Marian purity and female chastity.[23] The Christianised symbolism of the rose represented the Virgin Mary's maternal love for Christ; it is also a motif of the blood of a martyr.[24] Consequently, Christ, as the ultimate sacrifice and child of Mary, has a double association with the rose. St. Alban and St. Edmund's

[19] See Chapter One for this discussion in relation to male hagiographies. These themes will also be discussed in further detail throughout the chapter.
[20] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 876-905 (p. 855, II. 250-251, p. 887, p. 901).
[21] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 22-25 (p. 22-234, II. 24, 67).
[22] 'St. Cecilia', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 652-660, (p. 654, II. 62).
[23] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p. 127.
[24] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, pp. 128-9.

connection with the lily and the lamb as imagery served as an allusion to Christ and Mary and their shared flesh.[25] Likewise, Cecilia and Valerian receiving the crown of lilies and roses demonstrates the interconnection between Mary and Christ, through their shared suffering and as a dual model of imitation.

Recurrent motifs of royalty and spiritual warfare in male saint's lives allowed the male to occupy many roles. Christ mirrored these roles in his multivalent image as a solider, prince, king and virgin. Scholarship on virgin martyrs has typically reduced them to their singular characteristic of virginity, even in martyrdom. Bynum concluded that it is the anxieties surrounding women's piety that resulted in female lives being reduced to moralistic tales centred on women's struggles against the flesh and how to overcome it.[26] While men could occupy the roles of preachers and leaders, virgin martyrs were reduced to 'inspired vessels' or God's mouthpiece, repeating the theological value of virginity.[27] Chapter One demonstrated how men used the language of spiritual warfare to redefine masculinity, rewriting the male body from heads of households producing offspring to chaste warriors of Christ. The evidence we have is that vernacular saints' lives were typically male-authored or anonymous. Therefore, there is a clear divide between those who control their narratives and those who cannot.[28] This chapter demonstrates that while women did not have this power of authorship over their bodily discourse, the female body does not remain static or passive in its representation. The recurrent themes in the lives of virgin martyrs of virginity, voice, and the flesh are based upon medieval stereotypes and fears of womanhood. The dominant cultural narrative acts as a text written upon the female body. In order for the female body to be venerated as a model of imitation, the text must be rewritten and redeemed.[29]

[25] See Chapter One, 'The Shared Flesh'.
[26] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption,* p. 35; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast,* p. 25.
[27] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast,* p. 23.
[28] There is ample research into saints' lives and their authors. See the Introduction, fn. 179.
[29] This perception of the female body as a text is from Shari Horner, who argued 'the texts within these texts are the bodies of the virgins themselves, both written upon and read' in relation to the lives of virgin martyrs. This

The Female Body as Opened and Enclosed

As discussed in the Introduction, medieval concepts of the differences between the sexes developed from the humoral theory of Hippocratic and Galenic medicine that concentrated on complexion, disposition and shape. Humoral balance was gendered: men were described as active, hot, and dry, whereas women were passive, cold, and moist. These contrasts that innately linked biological attributes to gendered dispositions determined an ambivalent view of the female body. Men were the superior and women the inferior versions of the same organism.[30] On a biological level, the medieval definition of the sexed body is a fluid concept that situated the body on a sliding scale of completion. This understanding, which integrated scientific, medical, and theological discourse, influenced dominant cultural narratives that created a stark binarism of gender that denoted man as default and woman as secondary.

In Aristotle's *De Caelo et Mundo* (c. 350BC), the image of the *corpus animatum* demonstrated the most comprehensive view of the 'ideal body' that influenced the later middle ages. It illustrated a man upside down with his limbs extended inside a circle, representing the body as the site of orientation for creation.[31] On the other hand, women were considered a 'deformity', a 'monstrosity' against nature that had deviated from the 'generic type'. She was depicted as a failure of nature due to her 'voluntary [desertion of] God's pattern' of the ideal male body.[32] In medieval thought, sin was 'the conscious, voluntary desertion of God's pattern

chapter builds upon Horner's argument by demonstrating how all women had their flesh marked with the stereotypical characteristics of what defined a woman through the dominant cultural narratives of the period. See Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, pp. 95-102 (p. 95).

[30] Patricia Skinner, 'Marking the Face, Curing the Soul? Reading the Disfigurement of Women in the Later Middle Ages', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Yoshikawa, pp. 181-202 (pp. 184-5).

[31] Michael Camille, 'The image and the self: unwriting late medieval bodies', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Kay and Rubin, pp. 62-99 (p. 64).

[32] Aristotle in *Generation of Animals* (350BC) commented, 'anyone who does not take after his parents is really in a way a monstrosity, since in these cases Nature has in a way strayed from the generic type. The first beginning of this deviation is when a female is formed instead of a male, though this indeed is a necessity required by Nature, since the race of creatures which are separated into male and female has got to be kept in being. […] we should look upon the female state as being as it were a deformity, though one which occurs in the ordinary course of nature'. See Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, trans. by A. L. Peck (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942),

in the cosmos'.[33] Therefore, the biological and theological discourse written onto women's bodies innately associated them with sin and disruption of the natural order.

Far from celebrated, women's bodies were seen as threatening, unknown spaces in need of supervision and regulation. Spiritual guidebooks such as the *Ancrene Wisse* (c. 1225-1240) articulated the need to protect one's body from external influence.[34] These books were instruction manuals that aided mainly anchoresses, and occasionally laywomen, in their devotion through penance, confession, and bodily discipline. The *Ancrene Wisse* established a relationship between spiritual wholeness and bodily penance by visualising sin as a penetrative force that could enter the soul through unguarded entry points in the body.[35] It devoted an entire chapter to how women could guard their five senses and referred to the senses as bodily sites: the eyes as sight, ears as hearing, nose as smell, mouth as taste, and 'euch limes felunge' [each limbs feeling] as touch.[36] By locating each sense in an external site, the text demonstrated how the female body required guarding against external forces, such as sin. The text explained how 'of Eve, ure alde moder, [..], on alre | earst in hire sunne-in-yong of hire eh-sihthe' [Of Eve, our ancient mother, [that] first of all sin entered into her from her eyesight].[37] In this example, the female body is an open space that demands enclosure. The sin of Eve is associated with the state of womanhood. As the *Ancrene Wisse* also warned, when you look upon or touch a man, speak idly, listen to frivolous speech, 'thu art in Eve point – thu lokest o the eapple'

pp. 401, 461. This view of women continued into the early medieval period. In his commentary on Luke, Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397AD) stated, 'the woman is made to be the instrument of the first error'. See Gospel of Luke Commentary, 'Ambrose on Luke 4, Luke, IV, 1-13. Jesus in the desert', *Patristic Bible Commentary* (n.d.) <https://sites.google.com/site/aquinasstudybible/home/luke-commentary/ambrose-on-luke-4> [accessed 15 May 2020].

[33] Jeffrey Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in The Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 167.

[34] See R. L. A. Clark, 'Producing the Devotional Body in Late Medieval Spiritual Guide for Women', in *Medieval* Conduct, ed. by Ashley and Clark, pp. 160-182.

[35] Bridget C. McGuire, *Flesh Made Word: Women's Speech in Medieval English Virgin Martyr Narratives*, (ProQuest Dissertations publishing: Columbia University, 2015), p. 4.

[36] *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Robert Hasenfratz (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute publications, 2000), 2:5.

[37] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:47-48.

[you are in Eve's state – you look on the apple].[38] The text followed an Augustinian and Bernardian theory of the body that envisioned temptation or the will as Eve.[39]

By using Eve as an example of womanhood, women's bodies became stereotypical descriptions; she was 'by nature corporeal, sensual, and carnal'.[40] Iconographic depictions of the devil with a female face that occasionally mirrored Eve emphasized these negative associations. Late-medieval European art often represented the sexual guilt of Eve and the female body as a personification of lust, desire, and the downfall of man.[41] Theological ideas that influenced the late middle ages also used the dominant cultural image that linked womanhood with sin, the flesh, and temptation. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430AD) believed spiritual condemnation was inherited from Adam, for Eve was a reflection of *concupiscentia:* the personification of the flesh. Eve stands as temptation, an intercessory figure between man and God. As Augustine wrote, 'our flesh is an Eve within us'.[42]

Women's flesh was marked with suffering and sickness as they were considered descendants of Eve. Its unstable borders and contaminating fluids characterized the medieval woman's sexed body. According to the *De Secretis Mulierum* (c. 1200-1300), this excess of fluids threatened the body with deformity and sickness: 'menses purge the female body of superfluities, and thus maintain health. When the process of menstruation is disrupted, disease results'.[43] Medical discourse placed women's bodies at the border between sickness and health and framed their bodies as the vectors of disease. The verb 'purge' suggests that this sickness

[38] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:56; 2:215-220; 2:275-277; 2:440-441.
[39] Augustine of Hippo and Bernard of Clairvaux used Eve to metaphorically describe how temptation or the will acted in the body. This is further discussed in the section 'Removal of the Constructed Flesh'.
[40] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 7. Some medieval texts present woman as a leaking, polluted vessel that needs enclosing and protecting from external and internal corruption. In this context it is therefore useful to discuss Eve's association with sin and the flesh. However, the nature of Original Sin is a vast subject with differing schools of thought, some which place the blame solely on Eve, some on Adam and Eve, and some refer to Adam's sin being greater as he was tempted twice – by woman and the devil. In this thesis, see Chapter Three, fn. 91.
[41] Sandra Baragli, *European Art of the Fourteenth Century* (California: Getty Publications, 2007), p. 33.
[42] St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Expositions on the Psalms*, trans. by Alexander Cleveland Coxe (Altenmünster: Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck, 2012), google ebook (Psalm XLIX).
[43] *Women's Secret*, trans. by Lemay, p. 38.

comes from within: women's bodies must remove the unwanted qualities and conditions that afflict their sex. In particular, the womb acted as a disruptive force inside the female body.

The medieval gynaecological theory of the 'wandering womb' relied heavily on Plato's reading of the womb as a 'disobedient animal whose only desire [was] procreation'.[44] The theory, derived from Plato's *Timaeus* (c. 360BC), claimed that when women did not participate in a sufficient amount of sexual intercourse, the womb would travel around the body and create numerous ailments.[45] The etymology of the term 'hysteria' comes from the Greek word for the uterus: *hysterika*.[46] Although hysteria is now an outdated term for a psychological disorder that blamed women's bodies for a range of medical conditions from depression to epilepsy, the theory demonstrates how for centuries, for women 'the problem laid within'.[47]

The Christianisation of the notion of hysteria in the middle ages equated human suffering with sin and the image of the 'wandering womb' became understood through supernatural demonic forces.[48] Virgins could tame the 'demonic uterus' through physical chastisement and prayer. A tenth-century Latin manuscript containing treatment procedures advised the following incantation: 'O womb, womb, womb, cylindrical womb, red womb, white womb, fleshy womb, bleeding womb, large womb, neufredic womb, bloated womb, O

[44] When this need is unfulfilled, the womb grows discontented and wanders throughout the body, obstructing respiration and causing a variety of diseases See Plato, 'Timaeus, trans. by Benjamin Jowett', *Project Gutenberg* (2008) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1572/1572-h/1572-h.htm> [accessed 15 March 2020]. For further research on the 'wandering womb' and hysteria see Atkinson, *The oldest vocation: Christian motherhood in the Middle Ages*; Laurinda S. Dixon, *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Lana Thompson, *The wandering Womb: a cultural history of outrageous beliefs about women* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2012); Monica Green, 'Making Motherhood in Medieval England: The Evidence from Medicine', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 173-206 (pp. 172-3).

[45] Plato, 'Timaeus, trans. by Benjamin Jowett', *Project Gutenberg* (2008) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1572/1572-h/1572-h.htm> [accessed 15 March 2020].

[46] Helen King, 'Once Upon a Text: Hysteria from Hippocrates', in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, ed. by Sander L. Gilman, Helen King, Roy Porter, G. S. Rousseau and Elaine Showalter (Berkley and London: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 3-90 (pp. 5-6).

[47] Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and its Interpretations* (Princeton: Prince University Press, 1995), p. 292.

[48] Laurinda S. Dixon, 'The Curse of Chastity: The Marginalization of Women in Medieval Art and Medicine', in *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*, ed. by Robert Edwards and Vickie Ziegler (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), pp. 49-74 (p. 57).

demoniacal one!'[49] The association between the womb with disease and demonic possession coincided with the teachings of the Church that explained the primary cause of sickness as Original Sin, which was the result of Eve's disobedience.[50]

As established, spiritual guides warned anchorites to guard their senses against sin. Medical discourse described menstruation as a form of eliminating undesired matter from the body, and gynaecological problems were due to demonic possession. These understandings of the female body characterised it as physically open.[51] A woman's body was not only the cause of her corruption but also so innately driven to sin that their borders had to be physically protected and guarded. The female body exists in two categories: open and susceptible to sin, or guarded and enclosed. Women's social roles reflected this hierarchal model of the female body. Virgins, whose bodies remained guarded and closed, reigned as the superior model of womanhood. Widows were second, as their chastity enabled their 'opened' bodies to become enclosed. Lastly were mothers whose bodies endured childbirth and sexual intercourse and thus remained open. Medieval interpreters of the Bible taught that, 'spirit is to flesh as male is to female'; such exegetical readings defined, as well as influenced, sexual difference.[52]

'Spirit is to Flesh as Male is to Female'

In the previous section, I demonstrated how the medieval female body became inscribed with meaning by the narratives and agendas prevalent in the dominant discourse of the period. Female sickness, corruption, and sexuality were the innate markers of woman's nature caused by God as punishment for Eve conspiring with the devil and corrupting his 'perfect bodily

[49] Quoted and translated in Gregory Zilboorg, *A History of Medieval Psychology* (New York: Norton, 1941), p. 130-31. Zilboorg found this source in *Kyklos, Jahrbuch des Institut für Geschichte der Medizin an der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: Georg Thieme, 1928-1932), vol. II, pp. 274, 272.
[50] Yoshikawa, 'Introduction', in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, p. 13, fn. 32.
[51] Ashton, *Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography*, p. 138. For a breakdown on the female body as opened and enclosed see this thesis's Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages' and Chapter Three for a discussion in relation to mother saints.
[52] Brown, *The Body and* Society, p. 206.

image' of man. However, this cannot be the sole image of women, as it would leave them theologically abject. As well as the gateway to sin, the flesh was also a pathway to redemption through devotion. Acts of piety could alter the cultural discourse written upon the body.

In an examination of Middle English virgin martyr narratives, Shari Horner has argued that saints' bodies act as texts that are simultaneously written upon and read. The bodies of the saints transmit the spiritual messages of hagiography.[53] To read the body as a text aids understanding of how the medieval image of woman was developed and produced. Luce Irigaray has argued that man has constructed the image of woman.[54] Irigaray produced this conclusion from two main threads: that men have historically created dominant discourse, and that women do not have an image of the female divine to imitate. According to Irigaray, men have been able to define their masculinity and control the definition of woman because the image of God reflects the male gender. Without a compatible and stable image of identification, women's agency has become fractured as it cannot create a self-narrative.[55] Chapter One demonstrated Irigaray's first point, as men had the authority to change what masculinity meant to fit their requirements for spirituality. The hierarchal categorisation of the sexes in medieval discourse also demonstrates the barrier to the divine that Irigaray mentions. Women being considered inferior created the binarism that associated men with the spirit and women with the flesh. This association led to the medieval connection of men with the divine and women as the intercessory figure between man and God.

Irigaray contended that to become autonomous, divinity is essential. Throughout history, the divine has established one's understanding of society and consciousness.[56] If women have no god or 'horizon' for the accomplishments of their gender, they become static in their subjectivity. Women revert to archetypal roles of 'lover', 'bride', or 'mother', which

[53] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, pp. 95-6.
[54] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61.
[55] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61.
[56] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 61-63.

are also intercessory roles between man and God.[57] Irigaray claimed that throughout the middle ages, mystic women used and adapted these archetypal religious roles in their writing to gain social and political influence: 'women are represented as receivers of the spirit and not just as rather malformed monsters: manifestations of the eras of transition, between this incarnation and some other.'[58] To build upon Horner's theory in reading the text as a body, the use and adaptation of archetypal roles acts as a new text upon the body. Whereas some male saints demonstrated the authority masculinity had in redefining itself, some female saints show how the flesh could be rewritten and repurposed for redemption. The dominant discourse that created hierarchal models of the female body and figures to imitate demonstrated this through the open body of Eve and the enclosed body of Mary.

In a theological context, Mary stands as a mirror image of Eve: the one responsible for Original Sin, and the one who restored balance. From the second century, Mary was called the 'Second Eve' whose obedience at the Annunciation brought salvation to humanity after the Fall.[59] As Tertullian wrote:

> It was while Eve was yet a virgin, that the ensnaring word had crept into her ear which was to build the edifice of death. Into a virgin's soul, in like manner, must be introduced that Word of God which was to raise the fabric of life; so that what had been reduced to ruin by this sex, might be the self-same sex to be recovered to salvation. As Eve believed the serpent, so Mary believed the angel.[60]

The dual nature of Eve and the Virgin Mary demonstrated the social and religious battle around the 'opened' and 'enclosed' female body that extended beyond sexuality and virginity. Tertullian highlighted that Eve was a virgin when she accepted the serpent's offer to eat from

[57] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 62.
[58] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 63.
[59] Theologians such as Irenaeus and Tertullian emphasized Mary's role as a second Eve. See Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 40.
[60] 'On the Flesh of Christ', in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. by Peter Holmes, vol. 3 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885). Revised and edited by Kevin Knight, available at: Tertullian, 'On the Flesh of Christ', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0315.htm> [accessed 02 April 2020] (chap. 17, para. 1).

the tree of knowledge. Eve's body was chaste or 'enclosed', but she did not protect her boundaries; thus, they 'opened' through her sin, which became imprinted on her through menstruation and suffering during childbirth. The 'enclosed' virginal body of Mary signifies Eve's original chaste and guarded state. Therefore, the flesh is the pathway to both temptation and redemption, through religious obedience and sacrifice. Hildegard of Bingen wrote, 'today a closed portal has opened to us the door the serpent slammed on a woman: the flower of the maiden Mary gleams on the dawn.'[61] The language alludes to redemption. It is not an erasure of the past, but a chance to rewrite the cultural discourse imprinted upon the female body.

Mary does not have a typical female body. In the middle ages, many argued that Mary was born free of Original Sin and endured a bloodless and painless labour. The theological importance of Mary's body enabled a discourse to rewrite women's past sins. She was a multifaceted image of divinity and humanity, like her son Christ. Irigaray's notion of a female God comes close to describing the medieval image of the Virgin Mary. As the female body occupied the space between humanity and divinity, Irigaray argued for the feminine divine to be celebrated as a two-dimensional threshold.[62] She envisioned a female god that is 'always half open and in gestation' and united the archetypal roles of the lover, bride, and mother.[63] As demonstrated in Chapter One, male saints mirrored the multitude of roles Christ inhabited; similarly, I will argue such a multiplicity of roles for female saints is seen in the Virgin Mary.

The Virgin Mary as Mother, Bride, and Lover

The Virgin Mary was the most renowned intercessory saint between man and God. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, people interacted with the Virgin Mary through personal

[61] Hildegard of Bingen, quoted in Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 170.
[62] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 63.
[63] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 63. The Virgin Mary's importance and characterisation during the middle ages is referred to throughout the thesis. For an overview see the Introduction, 'Christ and Mary as Exemplars'.

prayers. It was customary for preachers to recite the 'Ave Maria' that called upon Mary to obtain forgiveness for humankind through her son.[64] There was no other saint 'so certain of receiving a favourable response from God as was Mary, for no saint had enjoyed so intimate a relationship with him'.[65] Mary's bodily presence in heaven on Christ's left side allowed her to intercede between Christ and sinners, who were placed to his left during the last judgement.[66] Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1153) wrote that Mary stood between Christ and the sword.[67]

Mary's role as virgin and mother characterised her importance. However, Mary was not merely 'mother', but the Mother of God. In 431 the Council of Ephesus proclaimed Mary *Theotokos*, and in Latin *Dei Genitrix* or *Mater Dei* [Mother of God].[68] Hilda Graef translated this as 'she who gives birth to God.'[69] As the mother of God, Mary exemplified the family, the fundamental unit of Christian life, and the reversal of Eve's curse through her devotion and sacrifice.[70] By saying 'yes' to becoming the vessel of God's Word, Mary became the symbol of bodily purity, with her womb considered especially holy as the focal point for the union between humanity and the divine.[71] For Mary endured a painless and bloodless labour when birthing Christ, while also retaining her virginity.[72]

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[64] Michel Menot, *Sermons choisis*, nouv edn. (Paris: Honour Champion, 1925), pp. 514-5. Quoted Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 92-93.
[65] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*. p. 102.
[66] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 102-3.
[67] In Bernard of Clairvaux's sermon on the Assumption of Mary, he writes: 'Truly, blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your soul. For unless it had, it would not have penetrated the flesh of your son.' Bernard's sermon demonstrates the shared passion that Mary and Christ felt during his crucifixion due to their shared flesh and the important role Mary plays as mediator between Christ and sinners. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons for the Autumn Season* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press, 2016), p. 68. This text is based on the critical edition in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones II*, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by Jean Leclerq and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-77), pp. 288-447.
[68] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 21-41 (pp. 38-9); Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 116-8; Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, pp. 11, 43.
[69] Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 46.
[70] Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 32; Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 94.
[71] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 1; Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 23.
[72] Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 27; Jill Ross, *Figuring the Feminine: The Rhetoric of Female Embodiment in Medieval Hispanic Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 111.

Mary received such favour from God due to the nature of Christ's conception, a contested topic throughout the medieval period. Some argued that Mary was born without Original Sin through God's grace, the doctrine known as the Immaculate Conception.[73] Responses to this belief varied greatly. Sentiments that ultimately led to the official establishment of this doctrine in 1854 are found in the early church. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397AD) championed Mary's unpolluted body as it was immune from the male seed. Ambrose heralded Mary's womb as an *aula pudoris* [hall of purity]: 'for childbirth did not change the nature of the Virgin, but established a new method of generation. So flesh born of flesh. Thus the Virgin had of her own what she gave; for the mother did not give something of another.'[74] Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) believed the doctrine detracted from Christ's role as the sole saviour of the people because it raised theological questions about how Mary could be saved from Original Sin before Christ's sacrifice on the cross.[75] Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) presented the theory of *Praeredemptio* [Preredemption], which argued that Mary was merely preserved from sin during the Immaculate Conception and was only saved, like the rest of humanity, after Christ's sacrifice.[76]

The debate around the Immaculate Conception reflected popular biological theories of conception during the middle ages. The Dominicans believed Mary to be a passive vessel impregnated by the active power of the Holy Spirit. This followed the Aristotelian theory of generation in which fathers, the active power, were responsible for passing on Original Sin as their seed was considered the catalyst of life.[77] However, the Franciscans were firm believers

[73] Thomas Izbicki, 'Immaculate Conception, Doctrine of', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 396-397.
[74] Ambrose, 'The Sacraments of the Incarnation of Our Lord', in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. by Roy J. Deferrari (The Catholic University of American Press, Inc: Washington, 1963), pp. 217-319 (p. 257); Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 27, 40; Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 352-36.
[75] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 29; Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 241.
[76] Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 242.
[77] Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 52; Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Women: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 B.C – A.D. 1250* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eeerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), pp. 383-98;

in the Immaculate Conception and heralded Mary as the saviour's mother, which followed the Galenic theory of conception.[78] Galen envisioned the female womb as an inverted penis (*matrix inversa*). He believed the sexes contributed equally to the formation of a child, as both male seed and blood had equal importance.[79] Therefore, theological and medical discourses were entwined and influential in the depiction of Mary as a 'vessel', whether active or passive. Likewise, conception and motherhood are fundamentally linked. The theological doctrine of the Immaculate Conception centred on Mary's position as the virgin mother of Christ.

The celebration of Mary as a virgin mother emphasized her as the two models of the female body in that she was both enclosed and opened. Medieval iconography simultaneously depicted Mary as pregnant, with the Christ child, and as a young maiden. Her body represented the biologically impossible feat of occupying the enclosed space of virginity and the opened space of motherhood. The virgin Mary adheres to Irigaray's image of the female divine as she united these opposing models into one body, thus dismantling the hierarchal discourse that constructed the female body. In turn, Mary's body was venerated as an enclosed and a leaking vessel. Mary's body was, as Ambrose and Augustine understood Ezekiel's prophecy, a '*porta clausa'* [closed gate]: sealed and protected.[80] However, her milk was also venerated through festivals and shrines as it was considered food from heaven.[81]

Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Women Volume Two: The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250-1500* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eeerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), pp. 95-110.

[78] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 52.

[79] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 52; Helen King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 56-59.

[80] Ezekiel 44:1-4; Saint Ambrose, *Letters*, ed. by Mary Melchior Beyenka (New York: Fathers of the Church Press, 1954), letter 44, pp. 225-30. 'Is not Mary the gate through which the Redeemer entered the world?'; St. Augustine quoted in 'Body and Symbol in the Medici Madonna' in Leo Steinberg, 'Body and Symbol in the Medici Madonna', in *Michelangelo's Sculpture: Selected Essays,* ed. by Sheila Schwartz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 96-128 (p. 122). 'This closed gate in the house of the Lord is Mary [..] Oh how marvellous is the Prophet's vision, but more wonderful still is the fulfilment of the prophecy. For what is the gate in the House of the Lord but Mary, who remained ever *virgo intacta*. And what is that remained forever closed but Mary who was Virgin before giving birth, and Virgin after giving birth.'

[81] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 59.

The veneration of Mary's breastmilk was also connected to biological uterine theories that also provided evidence for her holiness. Breastmilk was considered processed blood, which nourished and formed the flesh in the womb and transfigured into milk after birth.[82] The Incarnation explains how Christ was 'made flesh' in the womb of a virgin without the need for male seed. Therefore, Christ's flesh was created solely from Mary's blood. Mary's flesh and Christ's flesh are the same. As Christ gained his humanity from Mary, so does this relationship reflect a divine image onto the Virgin Mary. Mary's position as intercessor is not an inferior position that merely places her between God and man, but is due to the flesh and suffering Mary shared with her son.[83] Arnold of Bonneval (c. -1157) saw Mary's suffering as a vital component of Christ's physically suffering on the cross: 'Christ sacrificed the flesh, Mary the soul.'[84] As co-redeemers, Mary and Christ were interlinked in body and service. The blood from Christ's wound and the milk from Mary's breast were considered the same substance, linking the Incarnation and the Redemption. The virgin was also a vital part of Christians obtaining divine mercy: 'Mary ask[ed], the Son approve[d] and the Father grant[ed]'.[85] Christ and Mary are dual images of humanity and divinity that are equally dependent on one another. Mary's multiplicity is further demonstrated by her concurrent roles of mother, virgin, queen, bride etc. that existed in union with each other.

On Earth Mary was honoured as a bride and mother. In paradise, she ruled as the royal queen of heaven by Christ's side.[86] The Kingdom of Heaven was imagined under divided

[82] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 158.
[83] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 2; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 285, 278, 266; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110-69; Audrey-Beth Fitch, 'Mothers and their Sons: Mary and Jesus in Scotland, 1450-1560', in *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland*, ed. by Steve Boardman and Ella Williamson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 150-176 (p. 166); Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval* Europe, ed. by Smith and Leyser, p. 40.
[84] Quote and translation from Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis*, p. 89. See *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 189 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1890).
[85] Quote and translation from Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis*, p. 89. See *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 190 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1844); Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by Leclerq and Rochais, p. 279.
[86] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 2.

rulership, with Mary as the Queen of Mercy and Christ acting as the King of Justice.[87] Therefore, politically Mary as queen was a powerful concept. Ambrose of Milan associated Mary with imperial women such as Empress Helena Augusta.[88] In the ninth century, the Carolingians adopted the model of Mary as a dynastic whose status in heaven paralleled the imperial family's earthly rule.[89] From the royal queen of the early medieval period, the Franciscans transformed Mary into a humble young peasant girl.[90] Their sermons concentrated on her as a mother that their audience could relate to and recognize. This emphasis on Mary's humanity grew in importance, until the fifteenth century when her bodily nature became central to the Virgin's cult.[91] Mary's representation in the late middle ages was not static or singular. She was a virgin, both a passive receptacle that meekly abided with God's will and a 'temptress', who through her exceptional virtue, enticed God into impregnating her.[92] She was the Bride of Christ, the Mother of God, the Co-Redemptrix, the Queen of Heaven, and even the Empress of Hell.[93] Sarah Kay similarly stated that the Virgin is a contradictory figure that embodied a clash of contraries and challenged reason.[94] Like Christ, she is multiple in her characterization and celebrated as both an enclosed and opened body.[95] The Virgin's

[87] Oakes, *Ora Pro Nobis*, pp. 91-92.
[88] Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 28; Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, p. 41.
[89] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', p. 21.
[90] Ellington, From *Sacred Body*, p. 30; Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 182.
[91] Ellington, *From Sac red Body*, p. 31.
[92] Ellington refers to the erotic, allegorical language in the Song of Songs and the Book of Esther for her reading of Mary as a temptress. Ellington quotes late medieval sermons. Gabriel Barletta described Mary kneeling before God and pleading, 'let my beloved enter his garden and eat the fruit of his fruit trees (Barletta, *Sermones*, 45r-45v)'. Bernardino of Siena also characterised Mary as a seductress. One of his sermons reads: 'One Hebrew woman invaded the palace of the Eternal King; one young girl, with I do not know what caresses and promises, seduced, deceived, and I might even say wounded God. Wherefore the Lord was conquered by the Blessed Virgin as he says in Cant: 4.9, 'You have wounded my heart, my sister, my wife' (San Bernardino of Siena, *Opera Omnia*, 2:376)'. Bernardino of Busti (c. 1450-1513), inspired by the story of Esther, referred to God as being 'touched' by the love of the Virgin, so much that he 'laid aside all indignation and wrath and descended into her womb, laying down the rod of his anger. (Bernardino of Busti, *Mariale, Sermon 1*, 'On the Annunciation and Incarnation)'. Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 61-65.
[93] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 48, pp. 61-62; Koppelman, 'Becoming Her Man: Transcoding in Medieval Marian Literature', pp. 208, 210; Kate Koppelman, 'Devotional Ambivalence: The Virgin as 'Empress of Helle'', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18 (2002), 67–82.
[94] Kay, *Courtly Contradictions*, p. 179.
[95] See Chapter One for an analysis on Christ's multiple roles.

characterization that unites her roles as lover, mother, virgin, queen, and bride envisions a utopic bodily idea, simultaneously promising eternal life and offering a model of the redemptive body that utilizes, celebrates and unites the hierarchical model of the opened/enclosed female body forced onto women.[96]

The Virgin Mary was a spiritual comfort and aid; she was not alone of her sex. The sanctity of the saints reflected her intercessory role. Woman as intercessor was a significant active role in Christianity.[97] It went beyond the gendered stereotype of woman as a passive receptacle for the reiteration of God's Word. The virgin martyr saint demonstrates this in strong-minded, resilient and ardent representations of femininity that provided role models for young maidens during a (perceived) period of their lives of potential danger and sexual temptation.[98] The term 'maiden' itself had implicit ties to both 'girl' and 'virgin' and signified the period of female adolescence.[99] Unlike male youth, in which the halfway status represented incompletion or immaturity, maidenhood attained perfected womanhood. Images of the Virgin Mary in death and apotheosis, which always pictured Mary as a young girl, demonstrated this ideal status.[100] The virgin martyr reflected the expectations that young girls should be chaste, beautiful, modest and incorruptible: 'a maiden possessed all the attractive qualities of femininity but was free of the faults.'[101] While the Virgin Mary stands as an impossible ideal of the united open and enclosed female body due to being born without Original Sin, these

[96] Nirta, *Marginal Bodies, Trans Utopias*, pp. 2-3, 4, 14, 19. This reading was influenced by Nirta's analysis of the transgender body as a 'site of contradictions that embodies the idea of futurity' by examining the idea of utopianism as not a concept of an idealised, remote future, but a material condition that is actualised in the choices made during our everyday lives. Also see Josè Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).
[97] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. by Thomas F. Head (New York and London: Routledge, 2000) pp. xiii-xxxviii; Ashton, *Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography*, pp. 1-8; Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by Wallace, pp. 610-634; D'Evelyn, Foster, 'Saint's Legends', in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. by Severs, pp. 413-457.
[98] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, pp. 6-7; Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' Lives and the Female Reader', pp. 314-332.
[99] This is discussed in further detail in the section 'The Interiority of a Virgin', see pp. 108-113. Also see *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and the Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
[100] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 51.
[101] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, pp. 6-7.

virgin martyrs demonstrate how this is possible through the flesh's redemptive power. These virgin martyrs represent an idealised saintly body that imitated the Virgin Mary as a vessel of God's Word and an instrument of his divine will, as a new text written upon the body. As will be shown, this agency was manifested in an active, legitimised dialogue.[102]

The Virgin Martyrs and the Holy Ghost

Virgin martyrs as an 'inspired vessel' or conduit of God's Word is a common reading in scholarship and a clear motif in legitimising the female voice.[103] Although studies have begun to add nuance around the debate on the female voice and preaching during the middle ages, there were evident anxieties about and prejudice against women publicly discussing their faith.[104] Several biblical passages highlighted this tension. Timothy 2:12 stated that a woman is not permitted to teach or exercise authority over a man but must remain silent. Likewise, Corinthians 14:34-35 warned that women should remain silent and submissive, for 'it is shameful for a woman to speak in church'.[105] The main anxieties regarding female preaching were woman's association with the flesh and her inferiority to men, as the biblical quotes suggest. Women's exterior beauty was believed to have the ability to draw men into lust and

[102] Gail Ashton, *Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography*, p. 1; Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, pp. 84-5.
[103] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 23. This section uses the terminology 'Holy Ghost' as this is how the Middle English texts refer to the Holy Spirit, due to the etymology of the noun 'gost' which translates to spirit.
[104] Carolyn Muessig, '"Can't take my eyes off you": mutual gazing between the divine and humanity in late medieval preaching', in *Optics, Ethics, and Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. by Herbert L. Kessler, Richard G. Newhauser and Arthur J. Russell (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2018), pp. 17-28; Carolyn Muessig, 'Medieval Preaching', in *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, ed. by Edward Foley (Collegeville: Pueblo Books, 2016), pp. 62-72; Claire M Waters, *Angels and earthly creatures: preaching, performance, and gender in the later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The making of the Magdalen*; *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1998); *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Carolyn Muessig (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 1998).
[105] 1 Timothy 2:12: 'I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet'; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: 'The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.'

wanton behaviour, rather than God's dedication.[106] In his *Summa Theologiae* (c. 1265-1274), Thomas Aquinas' (c. 1225-1274) evaluation of private and public speech demonstrated this gender bias. Whereas idle, private communication was 'woman's speech', public addresses, especially to the church, were solely the role of men 'as their subjection is not from nature and sex as with women, but with something supervening'.[107] Aquinas' language adhered to a male/female dichotomy, which aligned masculinity with culture, knowledge, and wisdom, and femininity with nature, sex, and the flesh. While culture and intellect are man-made spaces, nature and sex signify chaos, ambiguity, and the unknown. This duplicity and uncertainty between the external and the internal was a major anxiety concerning women's bodies and their ability to preach.

With the fear of women's speech 'leading men into lecherous thoughts', the female voice needed to be legitimised and led to much of women's pious speech being labelled as a form of prophecy, not preaching.[108] In the middle ages, prophecy was a form of inspiration and contemplation.[109] From the thirteenth century, spiritual experiences fitted into two categories: the intellectual and the imaginary. Utilizing Augustine's definition of transcendental experiences, the cerebral, intellectual vision was the rational, private, divine experience and a form of *unio mystica*: a spiritual union that is incommunicable and is signified by an 'unmistakable knowing in the soul of the mystic'.[110]

In contrast, imaginary visions were concrete, material, sensory, and a lesser form of shared prophecy.[111] Mystical experiences were beyond misapprehension or deception. As the

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[106] Claire M. Waters, 'Dangerous Beauty, Beautiful Speech: Gendered Eloquence in Medieval Preaching', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 14 (1997), 51-63. Viewed online through the Illinois Medieval Association: <http://www.illixnoismedieval.org/ems/VOL14/waters.html> [accessed 20 Jan 2017].
[107] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae: 171-8, ed. and trans. by Roland Potter, vol. 45 (London: Blackfrairs: 1970), pp. 134-5.
[108] Alastair Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition c. 1100-1500*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Rosalynn Voaden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 47-81 (p. 49).
[109] Brian Daniel Fitzgerald, *Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages: Prophets and their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 2.
[110] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 15.
[111] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 16.

mystic knew they were experiencing God's truth, there was little need to assess the origin of the experience.[112] However, by the late middle ages, suspicion increased towards the validity of visions, which resulted in the process of the discernment of spirits (*discretio spirituum*). This method of theological questioning established if a mystic's visions were of divine or demonic origin.[113] There is a small number of medieval women we would consider as preachers, such as Hildegard of Bingen (c. 1098-1179) or Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380). Still, their wisdom and ability to teach publicly was because their speech was considered a form of prophecy.[114] The lives of these virgin martyrs repeat this explanation for their inspired speech.

St. Catherine of Alexandria was recognised as one of the most popular virgin martyrs and heralded as a bold rhetorician. Medieval Christians would often pray to Catherine to cure oral impairments because she was the patron saint of eloquent speech and diseases of the tongue.[115] The first hagiographical account of St. Catherine is in the tenth-century Greek text *Menologion Basilianum*, which suggests her popularity began to grow from the early medieval period.[116] Catherine's life is in the widely-circulated Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1259-1266) and two of the Middle English adaptions, the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438), which is discussed in this chapter, and William Caxton's translation (c. 1483).[117] Clemence of Barking's old French life of Catherine (c. 1100) used the educated saint to legitimize the female literary voice.[118] We see this theme repeated in Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre de la cite des dames [The*

[112] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 15.
[113] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 48.
[114] Carolyn Muessig, 'Prophecy and Song: Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women', in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. by Kienzle and Walker, pp. 146-158 (pp. 147-8). For examples of female preachers see 'The Virgin Martyr as Preacher' and 'Privileges of Virginity'.
[115] Anne Simon, *The Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval Nuremberg* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), p. 158.
[116] Lewis, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval* England, pp. 145-6. Scholarship has suggested the growth of the cult of St. Catherine is due to her popularity with the crusaders. Also see Christina Walsh, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexander in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 45.
[117] Simon Horobin argues that Catherine's life was likely part of Osbern Bokenham's translation of *the Legenda Aurea* but is missing from the Abbotsford Ms due to lost leaves. See Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 941.
[118] *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths: two exemplary biographies for Anglo-Norman women*, trans. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Glyn S. Burgess (London: J. M. Dent, 1996); Tara Foster, 'Clemence of Barking: reshaping the legend of Saint Catherine of Alexandria', *Women's Writing*, 12 (2005), 13-27.

Book of the city of ladies] (c. 1405) that related Catherine's eloquent speech to her education, not only to God's assistance.[119] Catherine's popularity was primarily due to her appeal for people from a range of social backgrounds.[120] For example, Catherine's life is in the Katherine Group, a thirteenth-century text that praised virginity and intended to instruct an audience of anchoresses. There are three surviving manuscript versions of this text in various levels of completion (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 34; British Library, Cotton Titus D XVIII; and British Library, Royal 17 A XXVII). All include 'The Martyrdom of Sancte Katherine'.[121] The anonymous 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine' (c. 1400) referred to in this chapter followed a secular romance narrative that was popular during the period and indicated how Catherine's life was also used for private, lay devotion.[122] The Middle English prose version of Catherine's life in the Southwell minster MS 7 (c. 1420) is an extended version of her legend, which included her mystical marriage to Christ.[123] Catherine's life also attracted attention from prominent fifteenth-century authors. Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (c. 1443-1447) included Catherine amongst its thirteen lives of female saints.[124] John Capgrave's *The Life of Saint Katherine* (c. 1445) is the most protracted and intricate *vita* of Catherine written during the middle ages. The text expanded beyond hagiography and used techniques and conventions associated with a wide variety of medieval literary genres, from fabliaux to chronicles and

[119] Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Rosalind Brown-Grant (Penguin: London, 1999), p. 204.
[120] Lewis, The *Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England*, p. 145.
[121] 'Introduction to the Katherine Group' in *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertson.
[122] The anonymous stanzaic 'Life of Katherine' can be found in the National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.2.1 (c. 1330) and Gonville and Caius MS 175/96 (c. 1400). The Gonville and Caius MS is the only complete version that has survived. See 'Katherine of Alexandria: Introduction and Select Bibliography' in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames.
[123] For an edited version of this text see *St. Katherine of Alexandria: the late middle English prose legend in Southwell minster MS 7*, ed. by Saara Nevanlinna and Irma Taavitsainen (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993).
[124] For an edited edition see *A legend of holy women: a translation of Osbern Bokenham's 'Legends of Holy Women'*, trans. by Sheila Delany (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

mystery plays.[125] All the hagiographies follow the same narrative that exalted Catherine as a superior dialectician who can confront and convert non-Christians.

The first explanation of Catherine's eloquent speech is her education. In the G*ilte Legende* life, Catherine is described as highly educated and outperforms all others in their studies. Her teachers soon became her students: 'clerks that were come to teche her and enforme her were full glad to become her disciples and to lerne of her'.[126] Because women were considered the inferior sex, they were only permitted to teach females, not male or mixed groups.[127] However, Catherine's teachers are referred to as 'maistres', denoting high-ranking men of authority and learning.[128] As the teacher of masters, Catherine is highly intelligent and learned. It is important to note Catherine is being taught in the privacy of her own home, not at a public school or university. St. Paul's condemnation that women must remain 'silent' in Church holds a double meaning, for 'silencio' referred to privacy.[129] Although women could not speak publicly, their religious doctrine could be voiced or written down privately to be presented by men.[130] When Catherine's speech crosses into the public sphere, this act of gendered 'ventriloquism' becomes apparent. The scholars marvel, believing her to be 'this mayde in whiche the spirit of God spekithe'.[131]

The motif of the 'inspired vessel' also appeared in the anonymous *Stanzaic Life.* When Catherine stood before Maxenceus' court, enraged by his enforced sacrifice to his pagan idols, 'sche hoof up here hand [..] | And blyssyd here fol wyttrly, | Ferst her brest and thanne here

[125] John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Katherine,* ed. by Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).
[126] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 880, II. 93-4.
[127] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition,* ed. by Minnis and Voaden p. 49.
[128] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 880, II. 91.
[129] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', p. 49.
[130] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', p. 56; Claire Sahlin, 'The Prophetess as Preacher: Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy', *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 40 (1997), 29-44 (p. 32).
[131] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 899, II. 676.

tungge'.[132] The imagery of Catherine blessing her heart and tongue alluded to spiritual guides directed at women. The *Ancrene Wisse* instructed anchoresses that in the presence of others they must 'crossith ful verorne muth, ehnen, ant earen ant te breoste mid al, ant gath | forth mid Godes dred' [cross very carefully mouth, eyes and ears, and the breast as well, and go forth with God's dread].[133]

Whereas the *Ancrene Wisse* imagery instructed women to be enclosed and silent, Catherine's gesture implies she was asking God to bless her and guide her tongue and speech. As Maxenceus is about to give his offering to his pagan God, she boldly demanded he dedicated his sacrifice to the only righteous king, Christ:

> I speke of Jhesu of Hevene within.
> Of alle kyngys He is flour,
> That suffryd deth for alle mankyn,
> He is oure alle Creatour.
> Behold Jhesu, the welle of wyt,
> Sere Maxence, kyng and emperour!
> This sacrefyse - to Hym doo it
> And seke Hym with thus mekyl honour!
>
> But now me thynkith doost thou so nought.
> Thou wyrkyst on a werse wyse:
> This folk that thou hast hedyr brought,
> Thou doost hem make the devyl servyse.
> Al that they doo, withouten were,
> To these mawmettys upon this gyse,

[132] The version of the text this is an edited edition of Caius MS 175/96 c.1400, which is one of the two surviving manuscripts that offers the complete text. See Reames, 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames, II. 6-8. St. Katherine crossing her heart also refers to the heart as the focal point of the Christian soul where a person's moral virtues and spiritual life resided. Therefore, the imagery links the heart and soul with the reference to God's angels being beside her. As Katherine sees her argument as if it had been divinely written on her heart this reinforces her speech as God-given. Mary Hayes argues, 'all speech is imagined to contain a divine element because the voice is the means by which God not only relates to but also created humans'. See Mary Hayes, *Divine Ventriloquism in Medieval English Literature: Power, Anxiety, Subversion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 8.
[133] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:205-6.

A dysseyvaunce is to hem here,
Fykyl and fals and al fayntyse.[134]

Catherine's bold rhetoric demonstrates how her heart and tongue have been 'opened' by God's sanctioning. Catherine no longer fears her body being invaded by sin for God is guarding her, as demonstrated by her actions in blessing her external openings. Catherine's body imitates both the enclosed and opened models of the female body: she is speaking openly and protecting her boundaries through her chastity and God's protection. For Catherine refers to Christ as 'the welle of wyt' [the wellspring of wisdom], implying he is the source of her knowledge.[135] This phrase also appears in the *Gilte Legende*, where it is said she 'dranke plenteuously of the well of wisdom'.[136] In the *Gilte Legende* version of Catherine's life, her words are described as a 'bataile' in which Christ bestowed 'victories' upon her.[137] Her speech acts as an extension of Christ's. Catherine serves as the vessel that not only contains but articulates and spreads Christ's doctrine.

Catherine is not the only virgin martyr who articulated Christ's words through her speech. St. Lucy of Syracuse was also a renowned virgin martyr. St. Lucy's life is in Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* and the three complete Middle English translations of the text: the *Gilte Legende*, Osbern Bokenham's *Abbotsford Legenda Aurea* (c. 1450-1455), and William Caxton's edition. Lucy's life is also in a range of hagiographical compilations, such as the *South English Legendary* (c. 1200-1300), *the North English Legendary* (c. 1350-1399) and the *Scottish Legendary* (c. 1350-1399), and verse adaptations such as Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (c. 1443-1447). St. Lucy's narrative conformed to a standard pattern: she is born to rich and noble parents, refused an arranged marriage to a wealthy pagan as she had sworn herself to Christ, and is subsequently tortured and martyred. When St. Lucy

[134] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 89-104.
[135] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 93.
[136] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 879, II. 80-84.
[137] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 901, II. 731-733, II. 738-739.

professed her faith, she refused to sacrifice to the idols of the consul Paschasien. When she accused him of 'techen þe soulis to forsake her creator', Paschasien replied that Lucy would cease to talk during torture.[138] Nevertheless, she stood firm when Paschasien questioned her, 'arte þou þan God?'.[139] Lucy responded:

> Y am þe seruant of God þat saithe: "whanne ȝe be before kyngis and princis þenkith neuer what [ȝe] shal sei, for it is not ȝe þat spekiith but it am y þat schall speke in ȝou" […] tho þat lyuen chaste ben þe templis of God and of þe holy ghost.[140]

The Holy Ghost or Spirit is part of God the trinity. It is different from the Father and the Son, in that it inspires and interprets scripture for believers and prophets.[141] In the Gospel of John, the Holy Ghost is a consoler, teacher, and testifier of truth.[142] Jesus, it is said, was 'conceived of the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary', who retained her virginity after his birth due to its authority.[143] Therefore, the Holy Ghost is linked to the shared flesh of Mary and Christ, for it is through the grace of the Holy Ghost that the 'word became flesh'.[144] The motif of the Holy Ghost speaking through the saints frequently appeared throughout the *Gilte Legende.* St. Christina is 'taught by the holy goste [to] dredde the sacrifice of ydols', and St. Agatha declared, 'I haue the holy ghost witheinne me'.[145] The motif of the Holy Ghost extends beyond

[138] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende*, p. 23, II. 53.
[139] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende*, p. 23, II. 53.
[140] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende*, p. 24, II. 59-63.
[141] Harriet A. Harris, 'Fundamentalism(s)', in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. by J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 811-835 (pp. 833-34); Samantha Riches, 'Trinity', *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1654.
[142] John 15:26; Catherine M. Mooney, 'Authority and Inspiration in the *Vitae* and Sermons of Humility of Faenza', in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Muessig, pp. 123-144 (pp. 131, 136).
[143] Matthew 1:18: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost; Luke 1:35: And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.
[144] John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
[145] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 483, II. 607; 'St. Agatha', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 175-178, (p. 176, II. 52). Like the other virgin martyr saint's discussed, Agnes's life can be found in a range of other hagiographical compilations, such as Jacobus of Vorgine's *Legenda Aurea*, William Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend*, and the *South English Legendary*.

the notion of woman as an inspired vessel. It not only legitimises the female saint's public voice, but envisions it as something that teaches, interprets, and converts listeners to Christian scripture.

In addition, the saints' words metaphorically take on the structural symbolism of the Holy Ghost. This motif is evident in another early virgin martyr, St. Christina of Bolsena/Tyre. Like the other virgin martyr narratives, St. Christina's life became well-known due to the popularity of compilations such as Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* (c. 1235-1264) and Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea.*[146] Christina's life also appeared in Middle English compilations of saint's lives, such as the *South English Legendary,* the *North English Legendary,* the *Scottish Legendary,* the *Gilte Legende*, and Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend,* as well as literary adaptations, such as William Paris's *Life of St. Christina*, Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen,* and Christina de Pisan's *Le Livre de la cite des dames*, which was translated as the *Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes* in 1521.[147] Like other virgin martyrs, Christina is of a noble and wealthy family. However, her family does not promise her in marriage; instead, she is locked in a tower to serve her family's gods as a temple virgin by offering incense to their idols. In the tower, Christina rebelled against her family. She destroyed the pagan idols around her and dissociated herself from her father. Due to her Christian faith, she was imprisoned and tortured. Christina's head was shaved, and she was led naked to the temple of Apollo. At the temple, she commanded the idols to fall: they 'felle and become pouuder'.[148] The God Apollo is a multifaceted figure in Greek mythology, but what is essential here is Apollo's role as the God of health and prophecy.[149] Apollo stood for harmony, order,

[146] 'Christina of Bolsena – Introduction and Select Biography' in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints.* ed. by Reames.
[147] For an edition of this text see *Boke of the Christine de Pizan, Cyte of Ladyes*, trans. by Brian Anslay, ed. by Hope Johnston (Tempe: ACMRS, 2014).
[148] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 485, II. 75-76.
[149] Geoffrey Ashe, *Encyclopaedia of Prophecy* (California, Denver and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2001), p. 7. Apollo is also known as the God of light, music, healing, and disease.

and balance as the God of health. As the God of prophecy, he stood for rationality and a singular form of truth.[150]

Furthermore, the Holy Ghost as 'wind' is a recurrent symbol in the Bible. In Acts 2:2, the Holy Ghost is described as a 'noise like a violent rushing wind' that filled the house.[151] With the Holy Ghost inside her, Christina's words became the 'violent rushing wind' in the temple that turned the statue of Apollo to powder. The image of a solid statue being reduced to fine particles through Christina's words indicates the authority she assumed. Keeping in mind Apollo's association with pagan prophecy, Christina's words also act as the only form of truth and the restoration of balance. Like St. Lucy berating Paschasien, explaining that the Holy Ghost acts through her when kings and princes fail, St. Christina's words serve as a condemnation of paganism, particularly when men have misused it for their own gain.

In *Against Jovinianus* (c. 393AD), Jerome of Stridon (c. 347-420AD) explained, 'it is the rule of Scripture when holy men fail, to praise women to the reproach of men.'[152] Caroline Walker Bynum also commented that when the male voice failed, the female saint could become an object of criticism of male religious practices.[153] Virgin martyrs' dialogue acts as a complex tool. It is a reductionist reading to refer to them as 'divine ventriloquists' of God's Word. The motif of the Holy Ghost acts to legitimise female dialogue and also centres women as an essential part in disseminating, interpreting, and, significantly, correcting the usage of God's Word. This interpretation also opens up gendered readings of the failures of the male voice. For when men misstep, God bestows upon women the ability to correct them. Subsequently,

[150] Tiffany A. Ziegler, *Medieval Healthcare and the Rise of Charitable Institutions: The History of the Municipal Hospital* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 29; Jamie Fumo, *The Legacy of Apollo: Antiquity, Authority, and Chaucerian Poetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 122.
[151] Acts 2:2, also see Ezekiel 37:9-14, John 3:8, John 20:22.
[152] Jerome, 'Against Jovinianus (Book I)' in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, ed. by Schaff and Wace, trans. by Fremantle, Lewis, and Martley. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Against Jovinianus (Book 1)', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30091.htm> [accessed 20 March 2020] (para. 25).
[153] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 37.

this questions preconceived definitions of preaching: women are far from excluded but an intrinsic part in monitoring and spreading the Word of God.

The Virgin Martyr as Preacher

The previous section discussed why women were prohibited from preaching. The main reason was the belief that women's beauty would distract men from the word of God and lead them to corruption. These anxieties surrounding women's dialogue created a clear division in the religious spaces men and women were permitted to speak. Clerics (invariably men) were permitted to conduct public performances before large gatherings and in churches, whereas women could only preach to a limited audience in the domestic space.[154] There have, of course, been exceptions to this. Mary Magdalene preached and taught publicly in the same manner as the male disciples.[155] Hildegard of Bingen went on preaching tours during the twelfth century with papal permission and in the fourteenth century, Catherine of Siena publicly promoted a return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome.[156]

The base definition of preaching is a mode of speech that publicly proclaims and teaches a religious message or belief.[157] In confining legitimised preaching to a particular space, the gendered differences between the public and private diminished the female voice and female places. Whereas churches and typically male-dominated areas such as schools and universities were deemed public, nunneries were private. Alastair Minnis has commented that these 'enclosures [were] made by 'men's hands' as a control mechanism.[158] The medieval

[154] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian*, ed. by Minnis and Voaden p. 47.
[155] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', p. 49.
[156] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', p. 49; Henrike Lähnemann, *Carolyn Muessig: Female Preaching (Oxford Medieval Studies Lecture)*, online video recording, YouTube, 14 July 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEHJgcMXJpE> [accessed 20 March 2020].
[157] Oxford University Press, 'preaching', *Oxford English Dictionary* (2021) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/149466?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=8SB039&> [accessed 15 December 2017].
[158] Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', p. 77.

definition of preaching aided in legitimising only the male voice due to the guidelines that deemed a place public or private. Minnis also stated that a strict medieval scholastic definition of preaching must be retained in scholarship. However, I question if the medieval definition of preaching always adhered to its own strict guidelines. As the next section shows, analysing these virgin martyrs as critics of male religious practice also demonstrated the public/private divide that aimed to diminish the female preaching voice. These virgin martyr saints teach, critique, and convert across the public and private boundaries. On the night of St. Catherine's imprisonment, the Queen went to Catherine with the knight Porphirie. At the prison, they were greeted by a marvellous light and witnessed God's angels tending to Catherine's wounds with ointment.[159] It is on this occasion that St. Catherine preached:

> This blessed virgine beganne to preche to the Queen the ioys of heuene with so suete and so devout words that she conuerted to the faith […] Whanne Porphirie hadde herde all her talkynge, he fell downe to the fete of the virgine and resseiued the faithe of Ihesu Crist.[160]

This passage is the first time that Catherine's speech is described as preaching. Her actions towards the knight and Queen mirror the act of a priestly blessing. This scene also occurred in the anonymous *Stanzaic Life,* where Catherine exhorted the Queen and the Knight to, 'rysys up in Goddys name, | And loke ye ben of counfort good'.[161] The Queen's response: 'we have seen al thy prevyté', alludes to the double meaning of private communication between women.[162] As a private space, the prison would have been an acceptable arena in which Catherine could speak. However, in continuing to teach them about how Christ shed his blood for mankind and demand them to forsake Maxenceus, her transgressive public preaching has crossed over into the private. This transgression is highlighted by the escalating effect of St.

[159] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 297-330; 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 900, II. 705-712.
[160] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 900, II. 712-14, II. 716-18.
[161] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 331-324.
[162] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 332.

Catherine's speech, for the Queen goes on to repeat Catherine's doctrine of Christ and converts her two hundred knights.[163] Catherine's voice does not remain enclosed in the private sphere: her words are not contained as a passive conduit of God's Word but spread, taking on new meanings, and converting others.

In the public sphere, Catherine demanded that Maxenceus denounce his paganism. Deeming it fickle, false, and treacherous, Catherine critiqued his use of divine images to establish his power. In the anonymous *Stanzaic Life,* Maxenceus is described as standing before his gods clad in rich clothing:

> Beforn hys goddys hymselven stood,
> In ryche clothyng he was clad.
> Glemen were there, bothe false and fykil.[164]

This positioning accentuates his vanity and the materiality of the gods themselves. While his gods are made from 'stone and bras', he has donned a more expensive and refined material.[165]

There is a definite male/female dichotomy at work within the text that separates Maxenceus and his body as cultural, not natural or biological. The imagery resonates with Irigaray's theory of divinity being a manmade creation that grants masculine power and authority.[166] Likewise, in the *Gilte Legende* Catherine asks, 'art thou not ashamed of thi blindenesse? Thou meruailest gretly of this temple that is made with mannes honed and of the precious ornaments that shal be as pudre before the wynde'.[167] Catherine's words act as a condemnation of paganism and claim Christianity as the only truth; again, the symbolism of the wind indicates the Holy Spirit's power in her words. The image also critiques Maxenceus's practice; by creating a manmade god, Maxenceus has become god-like himself – but it is as

[163] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 361-386.
[164] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 43-45.
[165] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 102.
[166] Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p. 68.
[167] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 896, II. 574-577.

false and fickle as the idols he surrounds himself with, which are easily destroyed. His clothing also acts as a symbol of reversal. In contrast, provocative dress and succumbing to vanity were typically read as female sins and intertwined with fears of women preaching. Maxenceus is characterised as a man submitting to pride and heresy. Therefore, Catherine acts as a conduit of the divine, allowing the author to criticize men's egocentric religiosity and practices. As she informs Maxenceus, 'thou wilt be a meke disciple y shall teche the true philosophie'.[168]

The voice of the virgin martyr as a critic of male religious practices extended to the domestic sphere and social practice. St. Cecilia's popularity during the middle ages stemmed from her inclusion in the widely circulated *Legenda Aurea* and two of the Middle English adaptions: the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton's translation.[169] St. Cecilia was also included in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1397-1400), where she is the main protagonist of the 'Second Nun's Tale'.[170] Like the other virgin martyrs, St. Cecilia is from a noble family, promised in marriage to a wealthy pagan. However, unlike the other virgin martyrs, Cecilia married her husband and converted him to a life of Christianity and chastity. In the *Gilte Legende,* on her wedding night, St. Cecilia informed her husband that an angel was protecting her virginity. She explained to Valerian that he was unable to see the angel in his current 'blind' state and he must be baptised by Bishop Urban. At the meeting, Valerian shared with Urban 'all the words of Cecille':[171]

> And whanne vrban herd hym he helde vp his hondez to heuene and saide: 'O thou Lorde Ihesu Crist, the sower of rightwys counsaile, resseiue the sede that thou hast sowed in thi yong mayden seruithe the as a bee to the honi euer in encresing, for her husbonde that she toke as a lyon she hathe sent hym to me as a debonair lambe.'[172]

[168] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 897, II. 623-624.
[169] St. Cecilia's life can also be found in the *South English Legendary*, the *North English Legendary*, the *Scottish Legendary*, and Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*. Simon Horobin argues that Cecilia's life was also likely a part of Osbern Bokenham's translation of *the Legenda Aurea* but is missing from the Abbotsford Ms due to lost leaves. See Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 941.
[170] 'The Second Nun's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 497-504.
[171] 'St. Cecilia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 654, II. 39.
[172] 'St. Cecilia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 653-654, II. 43-49.

Cecilia's words and actions advocate virginity and chaste marriages. Urban's response refers to Christ's message as a seed planted in Cecilia. The imagery of growth and fertility is reminiscent of the Aristotelian theory of reproduction, which placed the woman as the passive vessel to receive the man's seed.[173] However, Cecilia is not passive. She tends and nurtures the 'seed', Christ's message, by serving Christ as a 'bee to the honey'. The bee was an important symbol for medieval Christians as a model for community, diligence, and intellect.[174] Honey and honeycomb were also metaphors for spiritual knowledge and scriptures.[175] The Franciscan theologian Bonaventure (c. 1221-1274) noted that bees who make honey in their nests created environments that nourished the community, like those who use their knowledge of Christ to nurture and inform others.[176] Cecilia's words act as a communal distribution of Christ's knowledge and wisdom – she nurtures his seed to transmit to her husband, who passes on her words to Bishop Urban. It is Cecilia's interpretation and delivery of Christ's message that aids in her husband's conversion from a 'lion' to a 'lamb'. The symbolism implies that Valerian's faith was always inside him, referring back to the complicated relationship between the flesh and the spirit and man's desire for temptation and redemption. The lion in Christian allegory referred to the hidden nature of Christ. When a lion is hunted, he erased his tracks, which alluded to Christ's concealed divinity. The lion who slept with his eyes open represented Christ after crucifixion before he had arisen, and a lion roaring over his dead cubs represented Christ's resurrection.[177] The lamb is a symbol of Christ and his followers.[178] Therefore, Valerian's

[173] Allen, *The Concept of Women: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 B.C – A.D. 1250*, pp. 383-98.
[174] Fiona J. Griffiths, *Garden of delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 98; also see p. 102 for a reading on the eleventh century poem *Vestiunt Silve (Carmina Cantabrigiensia* no. 23), which likens the bees' chastity to the Virgin Mary and discusses the bee as a symbol for human perfection.
[175] Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, p. 98.
[176] C. Colt Anderson, 'Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexäemeron*: An Apologetic for Christian Humanism', in *A Companion to Medieval Christian Humanism: Essays on Principle Thinker*s, ed. by John P. Bequette (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 232-257 (p. 242).
[177] David Badke, 'Lion', *The Medieval Bestiary* (2011) <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast78.htm> [accessed 16 May 2020].
[178] Leslie Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 14.

transformation from a lion into a lamb symbolises his spirit becoming reconnected with Christ. Cecilia's speech goes beyond being a mouthpiece to criticise male religious and domestic practice; it interprets, teaches, and converts. Cecilia preaches.

These virgin martyrs follow a familiar model of medieval female preachers whose words extended beyond the private realm. In the twelfth century, the abbess Hildegard of Bingen expanded her authority from teaching her cloistered nuns in private to four public preaching tours between 1158 and 1170.[179] Hildegard's preaching tours communicated the need for church reform. As a prophet disseminating a divine message, Hildegard had the freedom to express her appeal to political reform.[180] Likewise, in St. Birgitta of Sweden's *Revelationes Extravagantes* (unused extracts of *Revelations* (c. 1303-1373) compiled after Birgitta's canonisation in 1391), Ex. 23 is an account of a vision Birgitta received where Christ instructed her on what the Brigittine friars should preach. Christ explained, 'they should discuss the Bible along with these words of mine and of my beloved Mother and my saints'.[181] The words Christ refers to are Birgitta's *Revelations.* During Birgitta's lifetime, she actively encouraged the inclusion of the *Revelations* in public sermons.[182]

Alfonsa Pescha (c. 1327-1389), the bishop of Jaén, was Birgitta's last confessor and interpreter who publicly disseminated her messages, through writing and in sermons.[183] Even after her death, the sermons of Swedish preachers often quoted Birgitta's *Revelations*.[184] Birgitta was a mediator of God's divine message. Alfonsa Pescha described her like a prophet

[179] Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars', in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Muessig, pp. 163-182 (p. 170); Sabina Flanagan, 'Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)', in *Dictionary of Literary Bibliography, Vol 148: German Writers and Works of the Early Middle Ages, 800-1170*, ed. by James Hardin and Will Hasty (Detroit: Gale Research, 1995), pp. 70-71.
[180] Paul Scott Wilson, *A Concise History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1992), pp. 73-77; Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179: A Visionary Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 59.
[181] Denis Searby, 'Extravagant Revelations' in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume IIII: The Heavenly Emperor's Book to Kings, The Rule, and Minor Works*, trans. by Denis Searby, ed. by Bridget Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 215-321 (p. 245).
[182] Päivi Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood: The Case of Birgitta of Sweden* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p. 164.
[183] Claire Lynn Sahlin, *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), p. 131.
[184] Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood: The Case of Birgitta of Sweden*, p. 164.

who 'beseech[ed] God on behalf of others and receive[d] responses for them'.[185] This description of Birgitta's message as a form of prophecy was an attempt to avoid criticism of her as a woman who was publicly involved in God's work. However, it does not diminish the scope of her message and influence. As *Revelations* book 2 demonstrated through its concern with public affairs, stately matters, and Christian leaders such as preachers, Birgitta also acted as a voice to critique male religious practices.

The acceptance of medieval women acting as preachers is most evident in the vitae of St. Rose of Viterbo (c. 1233-1252), a teenage laywoman who publicly preached on the streets of Viterbo, Italy. Darleen Pryds's examination of the two *vitae* in circulation during Rose's canonization process indicated a stark difference in the description of her preaching from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.[186] In the thirteenth-century vita, the word 'preach' does not appear. The text referred to Rose as a religious teacher who spoke to groups of women, both publicly and privately. The fifteenth-century version of Rose's life explicitly described Rose preaching. The reader is informed about how Rose 'raged fiercely against heretics and refuted their arguments'.[187] Pryds concluded that in both lives, despite the more conservative nature of the earlier thirteenth-century version, the context of Rose's actions is what constitutes her acts as types of preaching. The reason for this ambiguity resides in her gendered authority. Like Hildegard of Bingen, Birgitta of Sweden, and these virgin martyrs, Rose's ability to preach is due to her position as an intercessor of the divine.[188]

The dialogue of these virgin martyrs adheres to a form of preaching, in that it teaches and converts others to the Christian faith. However, the 'deviant' female body must always be legitimised. In addition to these virgin martyrs' speech as an extension of God, Christ, and the

[185] Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood: The Case of Birgitta of Sweden*, p. 131.
[186] Darleen Pryds, 'Proclaiming Sanctity: Rose of Viterbo', in *Women's Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 159-72.
[187] Pryds, 'Proclaiming Sanctity: Rose of Viterbo', p. 164.
[188] Pryds, 'Proclaiming Sanctity: Rose of Viterbo', p. 165.

Holy Spirit, virginity is also a key marker in alleviating fears over the female voice. As Catherine's antagonist Maxenceus displays his inner corruption externally, these virgin martyrs' virginity symbolically prints their inner purity onto their bodies. As Claire Waters established, a woman whose 'surface transparency' communicated her internal purity could be used as a figure to explore the social concepts and conducts of preaching.[189]

The Interiority of a Virgin

As discussed in Chapter One, male saints demonstrated a multivalent characterisation as soldiers, princes, kings and martyrs, mirroring Christ. On the other hand, hagiographies typically described virgin martyrs as 'virgin' or 'maiden' to the point that it became interchangeable with the saint's name. When Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Brown translated the *Katherine Group* and the *Ancrene Wisse*, they made an exception for the word 'maiden', as there is no equivalent term in contemporary English that means both 'girl' and 'virgin'.[190] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* 'maiden' refers to a young unmarried woman or female infant. This archaic term is rarely used to refer specifically to a virgin unless concerning the Virgin Mary.[191] However, there is a vast difference in the number of times each text employed this naming technique. In the *Gilte Legende*, St. Lucy is referred to by name sixteen times and by the terms 'virgin' or 'maiden' five times. St. Agnes is named fifteen times and called a virgin six times. Likewise, St. Agatha's name is mentioned eleven times and is called 'virgin' four times. St. Margaret is referred to by her name and as a virgin equally, four times each. St. Christina is only called a virgin once compared to being named eleven times. St. Cecilia is called a virgin six times but named twenty-three times in her text. In hagiography,

[189] Waters, 'Dangerous Beauty, Beautiful Speech: Gendered Eloquence in Medieval Preaching', p. 56.
[190] Millett and Wogan-Brown, 'Introduction', in *Medieval English Prose for Women,* p. xliii.
[191] Oxford University Press, 'Maiden', *Oxford English Dictionary* (2000) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/112442?rskey=O990F0&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 20 January 2018].

the names ‘virgin’ and ‘maiden’ dominate as a singular role a female saint can hold, compared to the multiplicity of roles male saints can occupy.

This gendered reading of the female saint is similar to how Irigaray defined woman as singular compared to man’s multiplicity: ‘the father is not single. He is three. [Whereas] the virgin is alone of her sex’.[192] By defining the Trinity in masculine terms, man has not set limitations upon himself: he is father, son, and spirit.[193] The first chapter examined how the multiplicity of masculinity, mirrored in Christ’s characterisation, aided in man defining their shared patriarchal history and avoiding finiteness. However, Irigaray’s argument fails to recognise the medieval portrayal of the Virgin Mary that also had no limitations. Like Christ, Mary was a multifaceted figure that encompassed all her characterisations of mother, virgin, queen, bride, etc., in union. Marina Warner has also argued that the Virgin is ‘alone of all her sex’. Mary’s exceptionalism as a virgin mother made her an unattainable ideal of womanhood with whom women could not identify with during their everyday lives.[194] Warner’s reading is apt. Mary is theologically and doctrinally unique due to the Immaculate Conception and the retention of her virginity after giving birth.[195] Warner also argued that unlike God, the ‘myth of the Virgin Mother [has been] translated into moral exhortation’.[196] I do not entirely agree with this sentiment. As demonstrated in the first chapter, Christ stood as an example in hagiography of Christian virtues to imitate. Likewise, the Virgin Mary is a model of Christianity that female saints can imitate. Mary is not alone of her sex but a multifaceted exemplar, like Christ. These virgin martyrs are not singular but reflect Mary’s multiplicity in their characterisation. References to these virgin martyrs as ‘virgin’ and ‘maid’ express the privileges afforded to the female body by virginity. The Virgin Mary occupied and was exalted

[192] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 63.
[193] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 61-62.
[194] Warner, *Alone of all her sex*, pp. 334-339.
[195] Warner, *Alone of all her sex*, pp. 241-2, pp. 334-6.
[196] Warner, *Alone of all her sex*, p. 336.

in multiple positions, such as Queen, Mother and so forth due to her perpetual virginity. Likewise, these virgin martyrs are most frequently referred to as virgins or maids contextually when they occupy an additional role of teacher, preacher, or bride.

St. Catherine's life in the *Gilte Legende* demonstrates the privileges that virginity can give to women; it also implies the multifaceted roles that the Virgin Mary offered and which they can pursue. For example, St. Catherine is named twenty-four times, but she is also called a teacher twice, a preacher once, a spouse or wife (to Christ) six times, a young queen twenty-seven times, and a virgin or maiden thirty-five times. Looking at this *vita* contextually reveals the reasons behind the disparity; she is referred to as a virgin or maiden most frequently when she is publicly speaking to Maxenceus and the scholars. Throughout Catherine's interaction with the scholars, she is called a 'maide', an 'eloquent uirgine', a 'youg frele mayde', 'glorious uirgine', 'blessed uirgine', a 'simple mayden', 'holy uirgine', and the singular 'virgine'.[197] Catherine also used the same language in reference to herself, claiming it was a fair judgement for the Lord 'to sette .I. maistres ayenst a symple mayde and behote hem gret guerdin fir her uictori'.[198] Catherine's virginity and her relationship with Christ are consistently referred to when she speaks. Before her debate, she entrusted herself to the Lord, 'her souerayne spouse', who promised her a great victory; the scholars themselves believed that the spirit of God spoke through her.[199] Catherine's preservation of her body through her vow of virginity, the transmission of the true word of God, and ultimate martyrdom through charity mirror Christ's actions when he became flesh.[200] It is her union with Christ's flesh, represented by her virginity

[197] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, Maide, p. 897, II. 601; mayde, p. 899, II. 676; Eloquent uirgine, p. 898, II. 631, p. 898, II. 635; Yong frele mayde, p. 898, 641; Glorious uirgine, p. 898, II. 647; Blessed virgine, p. 899, II. 664; Virgine, p. 899, II. 688, II. 692; Simple mayden, p. 899, II. 673; Holy uirgine, p. 899, II. 683, II. 685-686.
[198] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 898, II. 656-658.
[199] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 898, II. 649-653; p. 899, II. 676.
[200] Muessig, 'Prophecy and Song: Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women', in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity,* ed. by Kienzle and Walker, p. 149.

and pure interior/exterior that enables Catherine to 'preach', publicly teaching and sharing the word of God.[201]

In medieval thought, the virgin body and Christ's body were interlinked. Virgins were like Christ in flesh and mind and thus experienced a special union with him.[202] All the virgin martyr hagiographies discussed in this thesis highlight this relationship. All of these virgin martyrs are called a 'holy virgyne' or variations such as 'noble virgine', 'devoute virgine', 'right wise virgine', 'glorious virgine', and 'blessed uirgine'.[203] These adjectives directly linked these virgin martyrs' faith and worth to their virginity. Their social status as unmarried women was intrinsic to their consecration to Christ. The hagiographies continue this with the description of the saints. In the *Gilte Legende,* St. Catherine's *vita* begins with a lengthy background story that traces her heritage to the Roman Emperor Constantius Chlorus and empress Helena, ('holy Seint Elyne').[204] The description of Catherine's birth reads:

> And right as the faire and sote rose springith among the thornes, right so between the paynimes was brought forthe the precious spouse of Crist the holy uirgine Seint Katerine. Whanne this holy child was born hit was so faire of visage and so shaply of body that all hadde meruaile in [the] beholding therof, and bi the tyme she come to vij. yere of age she encresed so high beauute and stature that all hoped that saw her that in tyme to come she should be ioy and preisinge of the lond of Cipre.[205]

Catherine, as a 'rose amongst the thorns', is a multivalent symbol with both Mariological and Christological associations of love and sacrifice that allude to her inevitable martyrdom.[206] The

[201] Muessig, 'Prophecy and Song: Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women', in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity,* ed. by Kienzle and Walker, p. 149.
[202] Muessig, 'Prophecy and Song: Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women', p. 149; Carolyn Muessig, 'Paradigms of Sanctity for 13th century women', in *Models of holiness in medieval sermons: proceedings of the International Symposium,* ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Louvain-La-Neuve: FIDEM, 1996), pp. 85-102. Jacobus of Voragine's sermon on the feast days of the virgin martyrs explains how chaste women are like Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the angels in mind and body.
[203] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende,* p. 22, II. 1-2; 'St. Agatha, *Gilte Legende,* p. 175, II. 1; 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende,* pp. 108-112, (p. 108, II. 1); 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 876, II. 1.
[204] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* p. 878, II. 43.
[205] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende,* 879, II. 71-79.
[206] McLean, *Medieval English Gardens,* pp. 127-129.

description of the rose as beautiful and fragrant amongst the thorns designates Christianity as the 'true religion' compared to paganism. This line also begins the excessive language used to describe Catherine's beauty. From birth, Catherine is so physically attractive and well-shaped in face and body that everyone marvels to behold her. Her beauty and stature increase with age. At fourteen years old this 'glorious virgine', who has 'the worthiest blode in erthe […] the grettest enheriter that liuithe this day of woman [...] [who] 'in cunynge and wisdom [...] passe al other' [...] [and] 'in bodily shape and high bewte was neuer none' was crowned queen.[207] Catherine's age, youth and innocence are associated with her extraordinary beauty and status. Although her wisdom and fairness are incomparable, the superlatives used are about her body and lineage. Her hand in marriage is her most valued gift, one she bestows to Christ as a virgin.

The *Gilte Legend* also linked St. Agnes's beauty with her virginity. Agnes is a 'right wise virgine […] auunsien of her age and of gret wisdom, yong of bodi but olde of corage, fair of visage but more faire of faithe'.[208] The *vita* carefully assures the audience that Agnes is young in body, but in wisdom and courage, she is ancient. Describing Agnes in this way discounts the frivolities of youth but still ensures her outward appearance reflects her idealised state of virginity. This technique is used in most of these virgin martyrs' narratives when discussing their bodies during their torture and martyrdom. The use of the phrase 'tendre flesshe' reinforces their youth and innocence in the reader's mind.

The linking of virginity and beauty is not only a rhetorical feature of the *Gilte Legende*. An earlier edition of the *Life of St. Christina* was written during 1397-1399 by William Paris, the squire of Sir Thomas Beauchamp, the 12th Earl of Warwick (c. 1338-1401). Paris translated the *Life of St. Christina* whilst imprisoned with his master on the Isle of Man.[209] Paris's life

[207] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 882, II. 164-167.
[208] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, p. 108, II. 1-5. Like the other virgin martyr saints discussed, Agnes's life can be found in a range of other hagiographical compilations, such as Jacobus of Vorgine's *Legenda Aurea,* William Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend,* and the *South English Legendary*.
[209] William Paris's *Life of St. Christina* is an edited version of British Library MS Arundel 168, fols. 2r-4v. William Paris's adaptation has been dated between 1397-1399, due to lines 497-450 which explain Paris translated

uses interesting rhetorical techniques when introducing St. Christina. She is described as 'a maide bryghte' who 'served God both daye and nyghte, | As martyr shuld and virgyn clene.'[210] The term 'virgyn clene' uses the rhetorical device of pleonasm to emphasise the importance of Christina's virginity in her *vita*.[211] The depiction 'maide bryghte' affirms Christina as being in her maidenhood and directly links her physical beauty with her virginity and faith.[212] The *Stanzaic Life of St. Katherine* repeats this technique. The *Stanzaic Life* begins with a blessing to God and a call to the audience to listen 'to the life of a holy virgin that truly Jesus loved well'.[213] Again, Catherine's virginity and maiden status are linked to her devotion to Christ, who has affirmed her choice to remain chaste through offering her unconditional love. Even when Catherine boldly spoke out against Maxenceus for his worship of false idols, his astonishment is not initially directed to her forthright words, but to her delicate facial features: 'this emperour awondryd was | Of this maydyn, fayr of vyse'.[214]

Similarly, when St. Margaret informed the provost Olibruis of her noble background and Christian faith, he responded 'the two furst thingges perteynen to the rightfully, for thou art amiable and noble and art prouide to be right a faire margarete, but the iij. Thinge apertenithe not so fayre and so noble a mayde to worship a god that was crucified.'[215] To these virgin martyrs' pagan adversaries, their beauty and nobility were at odds with their faith. For a

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this legend whilst sharing imprisonment with Sir Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, on the Isle of Man. See Mary-Ann Stouck, 'Saints and Rebels: Hagiography and Opposition to the King in Late Fourteenth-Century England', *Medievalia et humanistica NS*, 9 (1997), 75-94 (p. 84).

[210] 'William Paris, Life of St. Christina', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames, II. 1-4.

[211] The MED defines 'virgyn' as a young married woman without sexual experience. The adjective 'clean' is defined as free from admixture, pure, unpolluted. Both words denote her bodily purity.
MED, 'virgyn', <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED51238>
MED, 'clene', < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED7950>

[212] MED, 'maidenhood',<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED26501>
MED, bryghte, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED6032> The emphasis on the maiden saints' great beauty alludes to medieval romance narratives, which contained complex representations of both men and women, often with the space to reimagine alternative femininities and social power structures. See Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 15-22; Amy N. Vines, *Women's Power in Late Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011).

[213] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 6-8.

[214] 'Stanzaic Life of Katherine', II. 105-6.

[215] 'St. Margaret', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 461-464 (p. 461, II. 14-17).

Christian audience, it transferred their inner purity onto their external body. Claire Waters explained, 'for a Christian audience, virginity and prospective martyrdom could neutralise the dangers implicit in the figure of a young and beautiful woman by demonstrating that her interior was consistent with her exterior'.[216]

Privileges of Virginity

The focus on these virgin martyrs' youth and beauty refers to how imitation of these virgin martyrs was focused on qualities such as faith, resilience, and patience.[217] Maidenhood was the 'ideal age' of femininity, as it was the period in a woman's life cycle most celebrated in hagiography, religious iconography, and secular literature.[218] The tumultuous narratives of these virgin martyrs describe this period of young women's lives, which was considered rife with sexual tension and potential threat: 'when maidens would need to do battle against the lure of men who would spoil their incorruption and against temptations within themselves'.[219] Saving one's virginity and remaining chaste is consistently framed in the language of spiritual warfare and heralded as a great victory.[220]

At the end of St. Agnes's life, she is 'couenable to be crowned and to haue the maistrie of vertues', which implies her purity and martyrdom gained her 'mastery' over all virtues.[221] The crown stands as a symbol of victory, marriage and has biblical connections of kingship

[216] Waters, 'Dangerous Beauty, Beautiful Speech: Gendered Eloquence in Medieval Preaching', p. 56.
[217] Winstead, 'Fear in Late-Medieval English Martyr Legends', in *More Than a Memory*, ed. by Leemans, pp. 201-220 (p. 201).
[218] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 7.
[219] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 80; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' Lives and the Female Reader', pp. 314-332.
[220] For this chapter my main focus is on how virginity aids in the description of the female body as enclosed or opened. For a balanced view there is also literature on how virginity can be read as both enabling and inhibiting. See Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*; *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih, and Ruth Evans (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); *Medieval Women: Texts and Context in Late Medieval Britain: essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchinson, Carol M. Mead and Lesley Johnson (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2000); Sarah Salih, 'Versions of virginity in medieval texts and practices' (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of East Anglia, 1999); Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*; Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*.
[221] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 108-112 (p. 112), II. 148-149.

with Christ.[222] The crown is also 'a symbol of singleness and thus permanent virginity'.[223] The circular symbolism also appears in another motif of virgin martyr narratives: the ring. After St. Agnes's death, a man suffering from torments of the flesh goes to St. Agnes's image and prays for her to be his wife. The text reads, 'the ymage putte for the her fyngre and withdrew it with the rynge and so he wedded her.'[224] Like virginity ensured bodily integrity, the ring and crown's images denote a symbolic enclosure that cannot be broken. Ambrose asked in his treatise *De virginibus*, 'for what does the chastity of a virgin consist, but in an integrity, unexposed to taint from the outside?'[225] The Latin noun 'integritas' [integrity] holds interesting connotations about subjectivity and language. The term alludes to correctness, purity, and figuratively speaking, it denotes 'the whole'. Likewise, these never-ending circular images like the crown allude to wholeness, infinity, and permeance. Therefore, a fulfilled image of medieval womanhood becomes tied to ideas of bodily enclosure and unbroken flesh.

The *Ancrene Wisse* expressed the notion of women's bodily enclosure rather robustly. The anchor-hold was metaphorically referred to as a woman's body to ensure enclosure in all areas. The text instructed that 'over al thet ye habbeth I written in ower riwle of thinges withuten, this | point – this article of wel to beo bitunde – ich wulle beo best i-halden' [above all that you have written in your rule of external things, this point – this clause of being well enclosed – I wish to be best kept].[226] The need for bodily enclosure stems from the sanctity of chastity:

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[222] Kim M. Phillips, 'Maidenhood as the Perfect Age of Woman's Life', in *Young Medieval Women*, ed. by Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge and Kim M. Phillips (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 1-24 (p. 9).
[223] Phillips, *Medieval Maidens*, p. 43.
[224] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, p. 111, II. 121-128.
[225] Documenta Catholica Omnia, 'Ambrose, De Virginias Ad Marcellinam Sororem Sua Libri Tres: Three Books Concerning Virgins', *University of Birmingham* (n.d.) <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0339-0397,_Ambrosius,_De_Virginibus_Ad_Marcellinam_Sororem_Sua_Libri_Tres_[Schaff],_EN.pdf> [accessed 21 Jan 2017]. This translation is from Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 354.
[226] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:177-178. See also *Ancrene Wisse*, 6:363-469. For spiritual ideas on enclosure and the female body as an anchorhold, see Liz Herbert-McAvoy, *Medieval Anchoritisms: Gender, Space, and the Solitary Life* (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2011); Mari Hughes-Edwards, *Reading Medieval Anchoritisms: Ideology and Spiritual Practices* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012); Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body*, pp.

> Alsa wase men worrteth mid threo cunes wepnes (with scheotung ant with speres ord ant with sweordes egge), al richt with thilke wepnen (thet is, with schute of eche, with spere [of] wundinde word, with sweord of deadlich hond) werreth lecherie, the stinkinde hore, upon the lavedi chastete – thet is, Godes spuse.
>
> [Just as men war with three kinds of weapons (with shooting, and with spear's point, and with sword's edge), just so with those weapons (that is, with shot of eye, with spear of wounding word, with sword of deadly hand) lechery, the stinking whore, wars upon the lady's chastity, who is God's spouse].[227]

The text refers to chastity as God's spouse, not the woman herself. Woman is associated with temptation and lechery, which connects her with the dangers of the flesh. In addressing the female body's historical constructions, Karma Lochrie has noted that female chastity and virginity are often described as an enclosure of the body.[228] The sealed female body signifies enclosure on multiple levels: through virginity and the senses, particularly sight and speech, which render silence an additional clause in chastity.[229] The link between bodily enclosure and access to Christ is due to the discourse that dictated the porous nature of the female body, making it susceptible to external and internal forces. Women represented the 'frailty of the flesh': the will that drove humankind to temptation rather than devotion. 'It is no coincidence [then] that chastity is defined for women as physical and spiritual *integritas*, or intactness'.[230] The medieval female body is framed as a dangerous permeable space that must be silenced and enclosed to retain not only chastity but also achieve a relationship with God. Lochrie concluded that the acts of *Imitatio Christi* were not a celebration of the female body's perviousness but

130-5; Jonathan Hughes, 'Alchemy and the Exploration of Late Medieval Sexuality', in *Medieval Virginities*, by Bernau, Salih, and Evans, pp. 140-166 (p. 150).
[227] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:128-132.
[228] Karma Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', in *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*, ed. by Allen J. Frantzen (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 115-140 (p. 125).
[229] Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', pp. 125-6.
[230] Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', p. 125.

reminded women to enclose their own penetrable and fragile bodies.[231] Lochrie's reading is problematic theologically. Lochrie stated that by valorising women's association with the flesh, women are excluded from the transcendent experience. This experience is defined as the process men went through when connecting with Christ, which saw them question their status and 'maleness' being linked to the spirit.[232] As this chapter demonstrates in these virgin martyr narratives, the motifs of speech and the Holy Spirit legitimise women's piety into an active dialogue that we can define as preaching. These virgin martyrs use the privileges that virginity imposes on their bodies to transcend the limitations marked upon their flesh. As role models, these virgin martyrs problematise Lochrie's reading as their silence is not an additional requirement on top of their chastity or relationship with Christ. The opposite is true: their faith is defined and disseminated through their bold rhetoric, which has been used as a model for the female religious outside of hagiography.

The life of St. Catherine of Siena provides an example of a virgin martyr's narrative serving as a role model for medieval women. Raymond Capua's *Legenda Maior* recounts how in 1368, Catherine's father died at the same time she experienced a mystical marriage to Christ. During solitary prayer, Catherine experienced a vision of the Virgin mother surrounded by the most blessed martyrs, virgins, and founders of the Church. The Virgin Mary took Catherine's hand and presented it to her son, Christ, in marriage. Catherine is informed 'she is now armed with the strength of faith to overcome all her enemies'.[233] The vision of Catherine's marriage to Christ is strikingly similar to Catherine of Alexandria's wedding to Christ, which also occurred after her father's death.

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[231] Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', in *Speaking Two Languages*, ed. by Frantzen, p. 127.
[232] Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', p. 118. This refers to femaleness being linked with the flesh and maleness with the spirit, as argued in this thesis's Introduction and earlier in this chapter.
[233] Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena: The Classic on her Life and Accomplishments as recorded by her Spiritual Director*, trans. by George Lamb, 3rd edn. (Charlotte: TAN Books, 2011), p. 82; Carolyn Muessig, 'Introduction', *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, ed. by Carolyn Muessig, George Ferzoco and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 1-22 (pp. 2-3).

Catherine of Alexandria is brought to a grand palace by the monk Adrian, who sought out Catherine on the Virgin Mary's instruction. At the palace, she is greeted by 'a riall queen' and a 'noble cumpani of martires and fellowship of uirgines' dressed in wreaths of white lilies and red roses.[234] The Virgin Mary presented Catherine to Christ, due to her great conflict and battle to defend her maidenhood, who asked for her hand to take her as his 'wedded wiff'.[235] Christ placed a ring on her finger so she may be 'gladde and strong in faith' for she 'must do gret thingges for [his] name'.[236] The mystic marriage, or *Sponsa Christi*, was a well-established theological motif by the fifteenth century that stemmed from the Song of Songs.[237] The biblical book Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon, is a love poem. According to the third-century exegete Origen (c. 184-253AD), it depicted a bride 'burning with heavenly love towards her bridegroom'.[238] In Christian thought, it has been interpreted metaphorically as the relationship between God and his people. Christ acts as the bridegroom, while the Church, the Virgin Mary, or the human soul made in God's image acts as the bride.[239] The *Sponsa Christi* motif demonstrated the ultimate state of union with Christ, in both flesh and soul.

Raymond Capua wanted the allusion between the mystical marriage of Catherine of Siena's and Catherine of Alexandria to be clear to his audience:

> Reader, you may know of another Catherine, a martyr and queen, who as we read, was similarly married to the Lord after she was baptised. Well, here you have a second, most happy Catherine being solemnly married to the same Lord.[240]

Catherine of Siena would have recognised the images of Catherine of Alexandria's mystical marriage from her local church and they likely would have modelled or aided her understanding

[234] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 889, II. 365-366, II. 377-379, p. 890, II. 393-394, II. 396-397.
[235] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 892, II. 478.
[236] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 891, II. 419-420, p. 893, II. 483-484.
[237] Carolyn Diskant Muir, 'Bride or Bridegroom? Masculine Identity in Mystic Marriage', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cullum and Lewis, pp. 58-78 (p. 59).
[238] Origen's commentary of the Song of Songs, quoted and translated in Jane Beal, *The Signifying Power of Pearl: Medieval Literary and Cultural Contexts for the Transformation of Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 29
[239] Muir, 'Bride or Bridegroom? Masculine Identity in Mystic Marriage', p. 58.
[240] Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, p. 82.

of her own spiritual journey.[241] The audience also would have connected these two women. Referencing the mystical marriage iconography in Catherine of Siena's hagiography would have been a way to legitimise her voice. Catherine was able to, as Raymond puts it, transition from 'silence to noise'; from her cell to public life; from being enclosed to being opened.[242] The virgin martyr, as a role model, demonstrates the privileges virginity and chastity could afford a woman. Virginity enabled women to publicly criticise male constructions, such as religious practice and dominant discourses imprinted on the female body.

Removal of the Constructed Flesh

The body can be read as a place in which concepts of good and evil are reflected. Certain behaviours or people considered a threat became aligned with images of evil, such as the devil. In the case of women, their agency metaphorically became the monstrous, temptress Eve.[243]

[241] Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), p. 87.

[242] Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena,* p. 88. Catherine's most notable political involvement was her influence with Pope Gregory XI and the Great Schism of the West. In 1374 a plague fell upon Siena and Catherine embarked on a letter-writing mission to reform the church and society. She believed the papacy's move to Avignon was the cause of rampant corruption through the church. In Catherine's letters, she begs Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome: 'Father, I am dying of grief and cannot die! Come, come; don't resist any longer the will of God who is calling you! The starving little sheep are waiting for you to come and take possession of the place of your predecessor and model, the apostle Peter. You, as Christ's vicar, ought to be residing in your proper place. Come! Come! Come! Don't put it off any longer!' See 'Letter T196/G4/DT64, To Pope Gregory XI in Avignon, February 1376', in *The Letters of Catherine of Siena,* trans. and ed. by Suzanne Noffke, vol. 2 (Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, Arizona, 2001), pp. 18-21. In 1377, after Catherine visited him in Avignon, Gregory XI finally returned to Rome. He continued hold her in high regard and she was sent to Florence to create peace when the Florentines rebelled against the Church, where she stayed until the peace treaties had been publicly signed. The people of Rome demanded an Italian Pope, but Gregory's successor Urban XI was later dismissed by the cardinals for his strict rule. A new pontiff was elected who set himself up in Avignon, supported by France, Spain, Scotland and Sicily, while the rest of Christendom remained under the Bishop of Rome. Known as the Great Schism of the West, this lasted from 1378 until 1424. During the beginning of the schism, Urban VI wrote to Catherine, asking her to visit him in Rome. She was presented to the cardinals and urged them to be strong and constant. As Raymond states, she showed that divine providence is always with us, above all when the Church must suffer. Hearing Catherine's words, Urban stated how this 'mere woman' put them to shame. Despite the backlash against Catherine's active social involvement and public addresses (from women who found her solo journeys too scandalous for a religious virgin to the citizens who cried for her to be publicly burnt), St. Catherine of Siena became a vessel for God's Word and critique of male religiosity and practices. In the same way that Catherine of Alexandria's words became legitimised after her marriage to Christ, leading her to publicly defend her faith and preach, Catherine of Siena's use of iconography allowed her to enter public life where she expressed her political views via physical travel and correspondence.

[243] Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (New York: State of University New York Press, 1997), p. 19.

Jeffrey Cohen has argued that, 'the monstrous body is pure culture'.[244] This definition emphasises the body's fabrication and ability to redefine itself. The monstrous body is layered with cultural understanding; additional layers are added and subtracted as culture adapts and changes. To build on Horner's theory of virgin martyrs' bodies acting as text during scenes of torture, I argue that these moments add a layer of 'culture' to the body. These scenes show how these virgin martyrs break away from the constructed flesh of the patriarchy that has deemed female flesh sick and sinful. The female body dissociated itself from cultural understandings of the female flesh and redefined itself through faith.

In the *Gilte Legende* St. Christina's father refused the many men who wanted to marry his daughter: 'her fader wolde graunte her to none'.[245] The verb 'graunte' ties Christina's social status and agency to her father: she is his property. Consequently, her father orders her to be locked in a tower; this is reminiscent of the imagery used in the thirteenth-century sermon *Hali Meiðhad* (c. 1210-1220), which described virgins residing in a high tower looking down at married and widowed women.[246] The tower of the *Hali Meiðhad* was in constant turmoil. It was attacked by the 'thralls of the flesh' and the 'devil's army'. For Christina, these assaults are the work of her father, who used flattery and pleaded for her to sacrifice to the tower 'goddes of golde and of syluer'.[247] With the Holy Ghost as her teacher, Christina spoke out against her father: 'calle me not thy doughter, but doughter of hym to whom sacrifice of preisigne belongithe'.[248] Likewise, when Christina's mother came to speak to her, she replied: 'whi callest thou me thi doughter? Wost thou not well that I haue the name of my God?'.[249] Christina's words imply that she is no longer the property of her biological parents but a child

[244] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 4.
[245] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 483, II. 4-5.
[246] 'Hali Meithhad', in *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertston, 2:2-5. I also refer to this section of the 'Hali Meithhad' in the Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages'.
[247] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 483, II. 3.
[248] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 483, II. 13-14.
[249] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p, 484, II. 35-36.

of God. By refusing her position as 'daughter' to her family, she removes herself from her name's social standing. Christina's dialogue begins her disruption and entrance into Victor Turner's separation stage; by denouncing her family, she detaches herself from the established social order.[250]

Christina's denouncement and demonization of her family line continued into the public sphere. When Christina's father demanded she make sacrifices to his idols or be beaten, imprisoned, and lose her status as his daughter, she replied:

> Now has thou do me a gret grace sithe I shall no more be called the deuel ys daughter, for he that is born of the deuel is the deuel, and thou art fader of the same Sathanas.[251]

Christina feels elated that her father has disowned her, for she will no longer be 'the devil's daughter'. By calling her father the 'father of Satan', Christina envisions her family line, or her 'flesh', as the root embodiment of evil. In defining the differences between the body and the flesh, St. Paul (the apostle) envisioned the body as a frail object at war with God's will.[252] Peter Brown detailed, 'the body's physical frailty, its liability to death and the undeniable penchant of its instincts towards sin served Paul as a synecdoche for the state of humankind pitted against the spirit of God'.[253] The notion of being torn between the flesh and spirit requires evaluation outside a binary definition that pits them against each other. Human beings lived in the 'flesh', which had the potential to be at odds with God's law, but the spirit of Christ dwelled inside them. As the sexed body as one organism could take on gendered attributes, so could the flesh be redeemed and controlled.

Due to women's association with the flesh and man with the spirit, several medieval theologians used gendered analogies to explain this concept. Augustine of Hippo referred to

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[250] Turner, 'Social Dramas and Stories About Them', in *On Narrative*, ed. by Mitchell, p. 232. See Chapter One of this thesis, 'The Saint in Medieval Hagiography' for a full explanation of Bynum and Turner's theory.
[251] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 484, II. 42-45.
[252] Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 48.
[253] Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 48.

the flesh as an unruly wife that rebelled against her husband, while Bernard of Clairvaux declared that 'the will is your Eve', when he described the drive of the flesh to temptation.[254] The image of Eve imagined as a corruptive force continued throughout the middle ages. This motif can be seen in the previously discussed *Ancrene Wisse's* warning to women to guard their five senses, for when they touch, speak, or look at a man they are 'in Eve's state' looking upon the apple.[255] The flesh is not innately evil but must be mastered and controlled to guard against corruption or vice. Vices such as jealously, anger, idolatry, and sexual gratification only serve one's own will or private needs and are all a form of rebellion against God's will.[256] Therefore, the insistence of Christina's separation from the flesh of her family holds important implications for agency and discourse.[257]

Concerning the divine, Irigaray claimed that, 'man becomes God by giving himself an invisible father, a father language.'[258] While Irigaray's concern is regarding the masculinisation of the Christian God, it draws attention to how man can use aspects of the divine to define himself and legitimise his power. The description of Christina's father as the 'devil's father' surrounded by his man-made gods questions his legitimacy and power. They are acts of self-indulgent, egotisms; he has surrendered to the needs of his 'flesh' against God's will. In Christina's denouncement, she separates herself from her father but also draws attention to the validity of the cultural discourse that links man with the spirit and woman with the flesh. It is Christina who is connected with the spirit, while her father succumbs to the frailty of the flesh.

Christina's separation from the 'flesh' of her father is emphasised further in her torture. The passage confirms Horner's idea of torture scenes creating 'writing' on the body through sharp implements, the drawing of blood, or in Christina's case, the removal of her flesh.[259]

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[254] Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, pp. 19-20; Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 426.
[255] *Ancrene Wisse*, 2:47-48.
[256] Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 426. Also see the Introduction, fn. 174 in this thesis.
[257] Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p. 68.
[258] Irigaray, *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, p. 68.
[259] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, p. 96.

Christina removed a handful of her flesh from her body and threw it at her father. This scene demonstrated the physical and literal separation of her flesh from her spirit.

> And thanne he comaunded that her tendre flesshe shuld be al torent with hokes and alle her members tore from other. And thanne Cristine took an handful of her flesshe and threw it to her fader and saide: 'Holde, thou tyraunt, and ete the flesshe that þou haste gote.'[260]

The graphic imagery of Christina tearing her flesh from her own body envisions women's position between the flesh and the spirit. Augustine referred to this position as the 'fissure' of the flesh, which was both at odds with human and divine will: 'the gap which the self-fell from God and from itself'.[261] Like women's fight for bodily enclosure, Christina has had to protect herself from external forces and her own body's corruption, signified in her tainted bloodline. Being the 'devil's daughter' comes with a duality of meaning; it both condemns the paganism of Christina's father and reminds the reader of the sins of Eve.

Women's bodies occupied the position between flesh and spirit because of their link with Original Sin. The Fall associated their bodies with the carnality and perversion of the flesh. However, the flesh was capable of redemption, through mastery of one's urges and dedication to God.[262] The rise of theological reflections on Christ's humanity opened up this possibility in a highly gendered way. Women had a special advantage in connecting with Christ due to their alignment with the flesh.[263] Therefore, the 'writing' on Christina's body through torture exposes 'the spiritual truth [her flesh] contains'.[264] The image of a bleeding, lactating Christ became a powerful identification tool for women. In Christ's body, women saw their own.[265] The passage above demonstrates this connection as Christina's bleeding and

[260] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 484, II. 46-49.
[261] Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, p. 21.
[262] Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, p. 22.
[263] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 23, p. 25.
[264] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, p. 96.
[265] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 217; Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe*, p. 98; Bynum. *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 289.

fragmented body alludes to the crucifixion. Likewise, in her martyrdom, St. Catherine desired to 'offer God my blode and my flesshe as he offered hymselff for me.'[266] While Karma Lochrie argued that women's mysticism sought to 'apply a bandage to the fissure of the flesh with the doctrine of the enclosed women', I argue that the female saint celebrated that fissure and fluidity by mirroring the mutable shared flesh of Mary and Christ.[267]

Devotion to the Shared Flesh

Christ's flesh and humanity were derived from his mother. As previously discussed, this stemmed from medieval uterine theories that the flesh was formed through the mother's blood and debates around the Immaculate Conception that claimed Mary was able to conceive Christ as she was born without Original Sin.[268] Mary as a powerful or divine being in her own right is a controversial and contested topic. Alexandra Cuffel has noted that the primary function of Mary's body, which coincided with her paradoxical position between pure divine and pure human, was to displace 'the dirt [on] Mary's body rather than Jesus'.[269] The 'dirt' in question being the carnal, unpalatable aspects of humanity. For although Mary's virginity was central to her role, her body was responsible for producing Christ's flesh and humanity. John Bossy and Donna Ellington believe that Mary's importance directly ties to her kinship with Christ and find it difficult to see how Mary could have acquired significance apart from her relationship with Christ.[270] These interpretations have continued the notion of the Virgin Mary as a passive vessel, which has also informed scholarly interpretation of virgin martyrs as passive receptacles of God's Word. I argue, however, that the shared flesh is an active site of

[266] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 902, II. 760-761.
[267] Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, p. 23.
[268] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 65.
[269] Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic*, pp. 123-24.
[270] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 11-12; Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 43; Pamela Sheingorn, 'Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History', in *Medieval Families: Perspectives on Marriage, Household, and Children*, ed. by Carol Neel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) pp. 273-301 (p. 296).

redemption because of Mary's position as the 'second Eve'. While Eve's 'flesh' led her into temptation, Mary's sinless flesh is the *materia* that redeems.[271]

Hildegard of Bingen referred to Mary as the *tunica humanitatis,* the clothing of humanity that Christ put on in the Incarnation.[272] In one of Hildegard's visions, she saw a woman receive Christ's blood as a dowry while a voice said, 'eat and drink the body and blood of my Son to abolish the prevarication of Eve and receive your true inheritance.'[273] The substances this woman consumed during this Eucharistic vision indicate that the *materia* that redeems is the flesh and blood given to Christ from Mary. Likewise, in the *Gilte Legende's* 'Life of St. Agnes', Agnes proclaimed that Christ clothed her with many virtues and bound them together by the passion of his blood.[274] After Agnes's death, she appeared in a vision clothed in gold with 'a lamb whitter thane any snowe in her right side'.[275] Agnes is often pictured with a lamb due to the association of her name with the Latin *agnus*. In this passage, although female virgin martyrs surround Agnes, she is the only one with a lamb at her side, which indicates her identity as a bride of Christ.[276] Poignantly, the lamb sits *inside* Agnes's right side, alluding to where Christ received the lance wound.[277] In addition to being noted as a bride of Christ and martyr, this lamb indicates a reversion of her porous female nature. Christ did not merely guard her openings: he is inside them. The sinless flesh Christ received from

[271] Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, pp. 162-165, 172, 182-3; Carolyn Walker Bynum, 'Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century', in *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*, ed. by Margaret Locke and Judith Farquhar (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 202-212 (pp. 210-211).
[272] Translation of Hildegard of Bingen *Scivias* (1151-52*)* from Bynum, 'Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century', p. 211. Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias* is a collection of twenty-six visions the saint experienced. For a translation see *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, trans. by Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990). This quotation is from Book Two, Vision Six: Christ's sacrifice and The Church.
[273] Translation from Bynum, 'Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century', p. 211.
[274] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende,* pp. 108-9, II. 25-37.
[275] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende,* p. 111, II. 106-8.
[276] St. Agnes mentions that Christ has made her noble with the ring of faith. See 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende,* p. 108, II. 25.
[277] In early Christian tradition, the lance wound was often pictured on Christ's right-hand side. However, around the mid-seventeenth century the wound shifted to the left. See Frank Graziano, *Wounds of Love: The Mystical Marriage of Saint Rose of Lima* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 226.

Mary, symbolised by their shared blood, has re-clothed Agnes and, by extension, the cultural markers of her flesh that deemed its breaches susceptible to sin. The shared flesh as clothing proclaimed the porous, fleshy nature of women as a means not only for sin but also for redemption. By mirroring the composition of the changeable and breach-able female flesh, the shared flesh celebrated the dual nature of women. Mary and Christ's virginity represented the shared flesh as an enclosed space, but it also opened a pathway to redemption.

Devotion to the shared and opened flesh of Mary and Christ is apparent in the joint veneration of the Virgin Mary's milk and Christ's wounds. The veneration of Mary's milk demonstrated how the 'leaky' nature of the female body was exalted in tandem with her womb's enclosed nature. Mary's milk, and by extension, her body, became incorporated as a symbol of spiritual nourishment. The description of Mary's body in Eucharistic terms demonstrates this.[278] The preacher Jean Gerson (c. 1364-1429) imagined Mary's body as a metaphorical dining chamber. Mary provided a banquet where all the graces of the Holy Spirit become food for believers.[279] Bernardino of Siena (c. 1380-1444) linked Mary to the edifice of the sacramental system in his sermons.[280] Mary's body as spiritual nourishment was a motif that continued throughout the high and late middle ages. Bernard of Clairvaux was pictured drinking the milk of Mary and descriptions of Henry Suso (c. 1300-1366) claimed he was 'blessed with Mary's milk'.[281] Mary's milk represented her power to heal and intercede on behalf of sinners. Taken from the Old Testament Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers,

[278] As previously stated, the blood that formed the body of the child in utero became refined as milk after birth.
[279] Jean Gerson referred to Mary as the 'mother of the Eucharist' in *Collectiorium Super Magnificat* (1437-1438). Due to current circumstances I have not been able to look at this text or order a translation (from my research I have found a German and French translation). Quoted and translated in Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 47. See also Ellington, '"Hevenly Conversaction": Mary as Supreme Intercessor and Mediatrix' in *From Sacred Body*, pp. 102-141; Bynum also looks at the links in late medieval art and literature between Mary and the Eucharist in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 81; Hilda Graef also discusses how theologians linked Mary to the Eucharist due to her shared flesh with Christ in *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, pp. 62, 313. For a short description of Jean Gerson's *Collectiorium Super Magnifica*, see *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. by Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 31-32.
[280] San Bernardino of Siena, *Opera omnia*, ed. by Perantoni; Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 47.
[281] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 152.

the religious symbol of milk represented plenty, abundance, and the reward of the promised land.[282] Therefore, Mary's milk symbolised the refinement of the cultural coded female blood that signified sickness and excess: whereas Eve's actions brought sin, Mary's facilitated the Redemption. The exaltation of Mary's milk as 'an entrance to the promise[d] land' coincided with devotion towards Christ's wounds. Both are refined versions of Mary's blood and are pathways to redemption.

Devotion to Christ's wounds was popular throughout Europe. His wounds offered instruction on the nature and extent of Christ's suffering.[283] The wounds served as points of departure (Christ's death) and entry: Christ's side-wound was renowned for birthing the Church, and his crucifixion wounds became sites of intimate identification and union with his pain.[284] In his *Meditations of the Passion*, Richard Rolle described Christ's body as a net, a book, honeycomb, and a dove house. Rolle wrote:

> Your body is like a dove house, because just as a dovecote is full of openings, so your body is full of wounds, and just as a dove being chased by a hawk is safe enough is she can only get to an opening in her dovecote, so, sweet, Jesus, your wounds are the best refuge [for us] in every temptation.[285]

The description of Christ's body as a dove house played upon the imagery of the Song of Songs which referenced the hidden nature of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary through the metaphor of a dove hiding in the hollow cleft of a rock.[286] Allegorically the dove is traditionally associated with the Holy Spirit, but there are also references to Mary as a dove during the

[282] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 132; Exodus 3:8; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 14:8.
[283] Gordon Mursell, *English Spirituality: From Earliest Times to 1700* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001), p. 190.
[284] Chrysogonus Waddel, 'The Liturgical Dimensions of Twelfth-Century Cistercian Preaching', in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Muessig, pp. 335-250 (p. 348); Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 159.
[285] *Richard Rolle The English Writings*, ed. and trans. by Rosamund Allen (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), p. 113.
[286] Song of Songs, 2:14.

middle ages.[287] In a poem on Mary's assumption, Christ called her 'my culver', a term of endearment which meant 'my dove'.[288] In another poem, Christ referred to her as, '*columba mea*, the cloystre of clandnesse, | *Ecce virgo, radix Jesse*'.[289] The poem plays upon the metaphor of the bride as a dove by alluding to imagery from the Song of Songs.[290] The imagery highlights Mary's important interconnection with Christ; she is 'the root of Jesse'. As the 'turtill trew', Mary symbolised the tenderness, innocence, and peaceful deliverance from times of turmoil that the turtle dove was associated with in early Christianity.[291] Reading Mary as a dove, therefore, resonated with the allegorical reading of God sending the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove to gather humankind into his Church.[292] Likewise, the sinless flesh Mary bestowed upon Christ aided in the Redemption. The shared flesh, through Christ's wounds, acts as a sanctifying entrance to faith. In *Memorial*, Angela of Foligno (c. 1248-1309) described her connection with Christ as if she had entered his side: 'at times it seems that my soul joyfully and delightedly enters into Christ's side.'[293] The imagery is an inversion of birth, highlighting a further reading of Christ's side wound as a metaphorical vagina.

Luce Irigaray, Caroline Walker Bynum, Karma Lochrie, and Amy Hollywood have written on Christ's side wound as a vulva or vagina that demonstrated a rewriting of feminine mystical desire and union with Christ through the partial feminisation of his body.[294] Entry into

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[287] David Badke, 'Dove', *The Medieval Bestiary* (2011) <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast253.htm> [accessed 10 July 2020].
[288] 'com, my swete, com, my flour', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. by Saupe, 49:3.
[289] 'The infinite power essenciall', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, 50:32-33.
[290] Elena Lombardi, *Wings of the Doves: Loves and Desire in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Montreal, Kingston, London, and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), p. 96.
[291] 'Swete and benygne moder and may', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, 85:2; Douglas Harper, 'dove (n)', *Online Etymology Dictionary* (2001-2020) <https://www.etymonline.com/word/dove> [accessed 10 July 2020]
[292] Badke, 'Dove', *The Medieval Bestiary* (2011) <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast253.htm> [accessed 10 July 2020].
[293] *Angela of Foligno Memorial*, trans. by John Cirignano, ed. by Cristina Mazzoni (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 57-8.
[294] Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, pp. 105, 164-190. Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 75-88; Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, pp. 190-200. Irigaray read the side wound of Christ as a metaphorical vagina that served as a site of identification for women's subjectivity. She later contest this theory due to her discomfort with the association of woundedness with castration, stemming from Sigmund Freud's theory of castration anxiety which relates to the fear of damage or loss of the penis. The counterpart for women is penis envy, where Freud claimed young girls envied those with a penis as they believed theirs had been taken from

Christ's side-wound served as a powerful image of unification that cleansed, nourished, saved, and united the mystic with Christ.[295] Bynum, using the example of Catherine of Siena, argued for the union of Christ to be understood not as an erotic fusing with a male but as a 'taking in and taking on – a becoming – of Christ's flesh itself'.[296] Hollywood and Lochrie argued that there is a threefold image present of wound, vagina, and breast that presented a complex interconnection of maternity and sexuality, masculinity and femininity in medieval Christian discourse.[297] I argue that the missing link in these theories is the reading of Christ's flesh solely as his own. The feminine imagery of Christ and the desire to 'clothe' oneself in his flesh are united through the Virgin Mary. For it is Mary's flesh that Christ 'clothes' himself in, which through medieval understandings of biological theory would pass on her virtues. The three-fold feminine imagery of the wound, vagina, and breast continues this transmission of Christian values through invoking maternal nourishment. In addition, the shared flesh of Mary and Christ acts as a tool to demonstrate the redemptive property of the flesh. Similarly to the way in which medieval theologians used the image of Eve to explain the desire of temptation and the corruptible nature of the female body, Christ's adoption of feminine imagery represents how the pathway to temptation and redemption reside within the same body. Angela of Foligno's connection with Christ sees her drink from the wound of Christ and enter into his side. Lochrie argued that 'the ritual of devouring, whether it is focused on the Eucharist or the sacramental drinking from the lateral wound of Christ, reminds the devoted subject that the way to perfection

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them. Lacan's reading of Freud's castration anxiety led him to associate femininity with woundedness or absence. See *The Freud Encyclopaedia: theory, therapy and culture*, ed. by Edward Erwin (New York: Routledge, 2002); Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Lochrie, McCracken and Schuitz, pp. 187-189.

[295] Hollywood, '"That Glorious Slit"', in *Luce Irigaray and Premodern Culture: Thresholds of History*, ed. by Harvey and Krier, pp. 105-126 (pp. 106-7); Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*, pp. 203-6.

[296] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 178; Hollywood, '"That Glorious Slit"', p. 118; Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', p. 183. Hollywood and Lochrie also find Bynum's association of eroticism with images of fertility and decay problematic.

[297] Hollywood, '"That Glorious Slit", p. 119; Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies', pp. 188-190; Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, pp. 164-90.

is strangely familiar because it was always the way to sin.'[298] Therefore, the shared flesh does not serve as a reminder for women to close their bodies, but exalts the porous nature of the female body: although it can lead them into temptation, it can also lead them to redemption. Women's nature made her equally susceptible to sin and divine intervention.[299]

We see women's dual susceptibility most aptly in the mirror images of Eve and Mary. As the serpent led Eve to the forbidden fruit, Gabriel led Mary to become *Theotokos*, the God-bearer. Likewise, the invocation of 'Ave Maria' in sermons was a reversal of Eva and Ave.[300] The *Salzburg Missal* (c. 1478-1489) contains an illumination by Berthold Furtmeyr (c. 1435-1506) that depicts Mary and Eve either side of the Tree of Paradise.[301] Eve picks an apple from the serpent's mouth while feeding another apple to a group of villagers. On Mary's side, she picks a Eucharist wafer from the same tree while feeding a wafer to another group of villagers. The tree's foliage contains a skull on Eve's side and the crucified Christ on Mary's. The iconography indicates that both life (redemption) and death (the Fall) came from women. The Eucharist wafers Mary hands out symbolise the body of Christ. As Eve tempts the villagers with her apple, so Mary feeds the villagers with the flesh she shares with Christ. Emma Maggie Solberg has astutely explained the multiplicity of Mary's characterisation:

> According to even the most Christocentric late medieval theologians, the Incarnation purified Mary's body of original sin and metamorphosed her matter into an

[298] Lochrie, 'The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse', in *Speaking Two* Languages, ed. by Frantzen, p. 131.
[299] Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 100.
[300] Solberg, *Virgin Whore*, pp. 76-77.
[301] Berthold Furtmeyr, *Tree of Life and Death*, c. 1478-1489, manuscript illumination, 377 x 275mm, The Salzburg Missal, Clm 15708-712, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, f.60v. Also see *120 Great Paintings from Medieval Illuminated Books*, ed. by Carol Grafton (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2008), p. 86. The text on the banderoles of the image indicates that Eve and Mary are feeding the villagers. The text in the two upper roundels quotes Psalm 77:25 (Man ate the bread of angels: he sent them provisions in abundance) and Psalm 36:16 (Better is a little to the just, than the great abundance). The angel on Mary's side of the image holds a banderole that reads 'behold the bread of angels made food for pilgrims'. The devil on Eve's side of the image holds a banderole that reads 'death is evil, life therefore is goodness'. Adam is also pictured laying at the bottom of the tree between Mary and Eve with a banderole that reads 'The serpent overcame Adam; he will get the forbidden food.'

> embryonic, incarnated deity. Her body became Jesus. In this sense, then, Mary fulfilled the serpent's prophecy. The second Eve became as God.[302]

Solberg's comment addresses the other side of the debate on Mary's Immaculate Conception. Although the claim that Mary's body became 'purified' at the Incarnation is at odds with the theory of the Immaculate Conception, the outcome still remains the same: that Mary's body was exceptional, without sin, and an integral part of human redemption. In creating these archetypal oppositions of the virgin and whore, the redemption of the flesh, and in particular woman's flesh, is again emphasized. The marks of sin can be redeemed. In the *Gilte Legende*, one of the tortures St. Christina endured was being thrown into the sea with a stone around her neck. Jesus Christ descended into the water to baptise her in the 'name of God my fader, and in my name Ihesu Crist his son, and of the holy goste'.[303] William Paris's hagiography extended this motif. When Christina is baptized she gained her true name 'Cristyn may be hir name orighte: | Than after hir godfadir so she is named'.[304] Her baptism is a metaphor for birth. When she is being boiled alive and 'roked [..] to and froo' by the king's guards she prays to Christ: 'I thankyd thee, hevyn Kyng, | That thou has ordeynd thus for me: | As twys-borne child that were right yonge, | Twys in credell rokked to be.'[305] The imagery of being 'twice-born' continues the motif of the removal of the 'flesh' and social standing that she previously inhabited and received from her father. She is no longer 'the devil's daughter'. In Christina's suffering, she unites herself with Christ and her true Christian parentage. She is remade in the shared flesh; it has restored her 'true' name and shed the association with her biological father and sinful human flesh by uniting her flesh with her spirit. In male hagiographies, gendered images of reversal are used for male saints to strip themselves of status and power and re-

[302] Solberg, *Virgin Whore*, p. 78
[303] 'William Paris, Life of St. Christina', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames, II. 55-58.
[304] 'William Paris, Life of St. Christina', II. 276.
[305] 'William Paris, Life of St. Christina', II. 313, II. 321-324.

emerge with newly acquired agency and authority.[306] In these virgin martyr narratives, descriptions of torture employ images of reversal surrounding female corruption and sin. These violent images articulate the saints' shedding of their culturally defined female bodies and their re-emergence into faith.

The Second Eve – Exalting the 'Opened Woman'

All the virgin martyrs discussed in this thesis suffer a series of tortures that do not harm them. A common torment in three virgin martyr hagiographies (St. Lucy, St. Agnes and St. Agatha) is being dragged to a brothel to be defiled. St. Lucy is ordered to be taken to a brothel but the Holy Ghost inside her makes her body so heavy it cannot be moved.[307] Likewise, St. Agatha is ordered to be sent to a common woman (prostitute) to be corrupted, but the Holy Ghost makes it impossible.[308] St. Agnes is dragged naked to the brothel, but God makes her hair grow so long and thick that she is better covered than when clothed.[309] These passages play on the perception that women are naturally inclined towards sexual temptation and vanity. If these temptations are presented, women will fall to their innate nature. Before Agnes is dragged away, she says: 'I tell the pleinli I shal neuer sacrifice to thi goddis ne I shall neuer be defoilled withe straunge filthes, for I haue with me the keper of my body that is the aungell of oure Lorde'.[310] Agnes associated paganism with filth defiling her body; her faith shields her against this defilement. St. Agatha also claimed that Christ protected her body from all filth.[311] In St. Agnes's life, the text pushed this redemptive arc further. When Agnes entered the brothel, God illuminated the building 'so that place of a bordell was turned into a place of orison, and for

[306] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 27-52.
[307] 'St. Lucy', *Gilte Legende*, p. 24, II. 71-81.
[308] 'St. Agatha', *Gilte Legende*, p. 178, II. 7-20, II. 51-3, II. 122-123.
[309] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, p. 109, II. 56-60.
[310] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, p. 109, II. 53-55.
[311] 'St. Agatha', *Gilte Legende*, p. 178, II. 122-3.

grete lyght men come thennes more cle[n]er thanne thei went inne'.[312] By turning a place of sin into a site of redemption, the text is explicit in paralleling how the two pathways are interrelated. The temptation to sin and desire for redemption exist in the same body through the flesh. While women's porous flesh may be susceptible to sin, it also allows access to Christ.

St. Christina also suffered a series of tortures that miraculously did not harm her. In one instance, Julian, her persecutor and judge, set a hoard of snakes upon her:

> He […] lete go to her tw[o] adders, two serpentes and .ij. aspides; [but these serpentes licked here fete, and the .ij. aspides] hanged ate her brestes and dede her none harme, and the adders wounde hem aboute her necke and licked up her suete.[313]

Motifs of sin and redemption run through this passage. The snakes are blatant references to Original Sin, the devil, and the serpent that tricked Eve in the Garden of Eden.[314] The serpent licking Christina's feet alluded to the anointment of Jesus when Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Christ.[315] Like Eve, the prostitute Mary Magdalene would have been associated with disregarding the spirit in favour of the flesh. However, as a saint, Mary Magdalene became the patron of a new order dedicated to saving fallen women and giving them a place to live lives of repentance. The image of Mary Magdalene anointing Christ's feet was used to illustrate a service of penitence.[316] By washing Christ's feet Mary Magdalene began her redemptive arc from sinner to penitent. In this passage, the serpent as the image of Original Sin is reversed:

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[312] 'St. Agnes', *Gilte Legende*, p. 110, II. 62-3.
[313] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 485, II. 80-85. Thomas Heffernan also discusses this moment in his chapter 'Virgin Mothers', in *Sacred Biography*, pp. 231-299. Heffernan wrote, 'the image is a complex composite of three women: Eve, the Blessed Virgin, and the woman in Revelation' (p. 284). Heffernan's chapter provides an excellent overview of the transition some virgin martyrs go through during their texts from virgins, brides, to mothers. In addition, Heffernan discusses how the violence in the text reminds the audience that virginity is always at risk. The virgin martyrs' sanctity is not necessarily achieved via their virginity, but by overcoming the continued risk to it (p. 278). Heffernan's argument complements my own that some virgin martyrs imitate the shared flesh that demonstrates how the pathways to sin and redemption exist simultaneously within one body.
[314] Genesis 3; Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003).
[315] Matthew 26, Mark 14, and John 12.
[316] Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 34. Mary Magdalene was a combination of three sinful women who were in contact with Christ.

the snakes' nature has changed. Instead of hurting Christina, it is docile and nurturing towards her. Likewise, the image of the asps 'hanging at [Christina's] breasts' presents a merging of Eve and the Virgin Mary's iconography. Christina breastfeeding the snake emphasises Mary's position as the 'new Eve' and the flesh's ability to be redeemed. This motif of the redemptive flesh is further alluded to by the adders around Christina's neck that lick her sweat. The snake shedding its skin stood as an allegorical reminder that one must shed one's old self during salvation.[317] Christina's sweat shows the nature of woman: moist and leaking, dried by the snake. The snakes act as images of gendered reversal that demonstrate the redemptive possibilities of the flesh that was offered through devotion not only to Christ, but the flesh Christ and Mary shared.

Christina's martyrdom demonstrated this reading of these virgin martyrs 'taking on' Mary and Christ's shared flesh. Angered that multiple tortures have left Christina unscathed, Julian 'made two arowes to be shotte towards her hert and one towards her syde, and whanne she was smetin she yelded up the sperit to our Lord'.[318] The arrow shot through Christina's side parallels the final wound of Christ during his crucifixion when the lance pierced his side.[319] The arrow through Christina's heart reflects the Virgin Mary as the Lady of Sorrows or *mater dolorosa*.[320] This sorrowful image of the virgin with her heart pierced with one to seven knives or daggers displays the shared passion Mary felt during the crucifixion and death of her son.[321] Mary's position as mediator links to the shared flesh and suffering she experienced with her son. Although there is only one biblical passage that overtly linked Mary's suffering to Christ's

[317] Badke, 'Snake', *The Medieval Bestiary* (2011) < http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast264.htm> [accessed 25 March 2020].
[318] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 484, II. 95-96.
[319] John 19:34.
[320] Ellington, 'The Sword of Compassion: Mary and the Passion in the Middle Ages' in *From Sacred Body*, pp. 77-101; Warner, *Alone in all her sex*, pp. 222-223.
[321] It was believed that the wounds Christ received in his body, Mary bore in her heart. See Pacellia Millane, 'A Medieval Franciscan Meditation on the Mother of Jesus', in *Medieval Franciscan approaches to the Virgin Mary*, ed. by McMichael and Shelby, pp. 252-274 (p. 261); Alessia Francone, 'The Virgin Mary in Latin and German Sermons of Berthold of Regensbury', in *Medieval Franciscan approaches to the Virgin Mary*, ed. by McMicheal and Shelby, pp. 227-265 (p. 351); Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 91.

(Luke 2:34-35), the late medieval emphasis on Christ's humanity brought Mary's shared suffering to the forefront of the debate to identify with their pain. As the perfect imitator of her son, Mary offered a model that could be imitated by Christians wishing to experience his pain.[322] This theme is in *The Book of Margery Kempe* (c. 1436-1438), where Margery Kempe's (c. 1373-1438) affective piety followed the devotional model of *imitatio Mariae.*[323]

Mary's intimate participation in Christ's suffering and the Redemption earned her the right to intervene on behalf of sinners and persuade her son to grant mercy.[324] In Mary's shared suffering, she was 'more than a martyr', for she sacrificed herself twice for her son.[325] This reading of Mary also explained female stigmata; in Tommaso Caffarini's (c. 1350-1434) fifteenth-century sermon entitled 'On the Wounds and Stigmata of Christ and also of the Virgin Mary and of other Saints' he wrote: 'indeed the crucifixion and wounding of Christ's body was a co-crucifixion and co-wounding of the Mother's body.'[326] In Christina's martyrdom, she becomes a dual image in one. She simultaneously demonstrates Christ's crucifixion and the Virgin Mary as the Lady of Sorrows, emphasising Christ and Mary's unity in one body through their shared passion and shared flesh.

Christina's hagiography demonstrated how these virgin martyrs shed their biological flesh to 'put on' the shared flesh of Mary and Christ. To add to Shari Horner's theory of virgin martyrs' bodies acting as a text during martyrdom scenes, I suggest that the shared flesh can be read as a 'genre' of discourse – a text that the saint can adopt. This interpretation has stemmed from the trans theory of Sandy Stone. In the same manner as medieval ideas of the female body were cultural constructions, in our contemporary world medical and mainstream

[322] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 77.
[323] Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*, pp. 47-51.
[324] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 2.
[325] Bernard of Clairvaux refers to Mary as 'more than a martyr' in his sermon on the Assumption of Mary. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons for the Autumn Season*, p. 68.
[326] 'Sermo III', in Tommaso Caffarini (Tommaso Antonii de Senis), *Libellus de supplemento legende prolixe virginis beate Catherine de Senis*, ed. by Giuliana Cavallini and Imelda Foralosso (Rome: Edizioni Cateriniane, 1974), *Pars II, Tractatus VII*, pp. 121–266, (p. 243, ll. 6583–4). Quoted and translated in Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p 178.

media have constructed the transgender body.[327] Stone examined how medical discourse has disregarded transgender autobiographical literature, as these accounts were considered unreliable, and used a strict criteria for gender reassignment surgery based on a 'Western white male definition of performative gender'.[328] The medical model reinforced a binary model of gender, which produced a textbook definition of the transgender individual. In operating with a strict definition of gender identity, the individuals accepted for surgery were chosen for their likelihood in successfully reproducing a normative ideal of gender performance. This created a self-fulling effect, with the criteria acting as a tick-box through the transgender community. The medical guidelines did not evaluate or consider the lived experience of the transgender individuals but merely offered a list of accepted symptoms that needed to be evident in order to receive treatment.[329] The denial of transgender subjectivity has led to media portrays of successful transgender individuals, ones who pass as their lived gender, and 'failed' transgender individuals, who do not comply to Western normative views of gender.[330] These accounts, in maintaining agendas of normative gender performance, ultimately demonised the transgender body.[331]

> Transsexuals are infantilized, considered too illogical or irresponsible to achieve true subjectivity, or clinically erased by diagnostic criteria; or else, as constructed by some radical feminist theorists, as robots of an insidious and menacing patriarchy, an alien army designed and constructed to infiltrate, pervert and destroy "true" women.[332]

[327] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, pp. 224-230.
[328] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', p. 225.
[329] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', pp. 227-229.
[330] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', pp. 229-230.
[331] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', pp. 229-230.
[332] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', pp. 229-230.

Stone explained that for the transgender subject to gain agency, they must speak outside the traditional gender frameworks. A transgender person should not be seen as a 'problematic "third gender", but rather a genre' – a set of embodied texts with the potential to disrupt.[333]

In *Meditations on the Passions*, Richard Rolle (c. 1300-1349) described Christ's body as 'a book entirely inscribed with red ink'.[334] Rolle implored Christ to let him 'read this book again and again […] and allow [him] the grace to grasp something of the matchless love of Jesus Christ, and to learn from that example to love God in return as [he] should do'.[335] This passage describes the shared flesh as a text from which one can learn and adopt. Rolle does not desire dissociation from his past self, but to ponder, meditate, and converse with the flesh perpetually. The shared flesh as a genre of text indicates the redemptive property of the flesh. The shared flesh of Mary and Christ as a textual genre can be placed onto the cultural text of the body. As an additional layer, it can disrupt conventional gendered discourses that have deemed female flesh defective and in need of enclosure and the male flesh as superior and dominant. By interacting with the shared flesh as a textual genre, the body can be reconstructed through faith.

Like the opened, bleeding, and lactating flesh of Mary and Christ, these virgin martyrs in life and death are not closed but leaking holy vessels. For example, in the *Gilte Legende*, Julian commanded that St. Christina's breasts be cut off but, 'oute of hem come melke in stede of blood'.[336] Likewise, when St. Catherine is beheaded 'in stede of blode ther came oute a gret streme of mylke'.[337] Christina and Catherine bleeding milk alludes to their refined blood: it is not the waste of menstruation, but nourishing. The scene demonstrates a re-writing of the female cultural body: no longer associated with sin and corruption. These virgin martyrs' open

[333] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, p. 231.
[334] *Richard Rolle The English Writings*, p. 114.
[335] *Richard Rolle The English Writings*, p. 114.
[336] 'St. Christina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 485, II. 90-91.
[337] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 904, II. 819-821.

wounds represent purity and exemplify them as nurturing mothers to the early church.[338] Even after death, St. Catherine's tomb is described as leaking holy oil with properties that heal sickness:

> This holy place oure [Lorde] lust to worship by gret miracle, [for] of tho holy bones that an hundred wynter had layne and dried in the coppe of the hill, plente of oyle welled oute largely, whiche oyle is of so gret vertu that it yeuithe hele to all manere of siknesse as it ys knowen to mani a deout pilgryme which haue uisted that right holy and devout place.[339]

Like Christ's blood at the crucifixion, which is not the congealed blood of death, but living, birthing, and spiritually nourishing, Catherine's body leaking healing oil plays on the trope of menstruation blood being linked to sickness, imbalance, and pollution.[340] It reverses these signifiers and again highlights the redemptive properties of the flesh. Through sacrifice and devotion, the leaky and opened female flesh is not enclosed but praised even in its secretions.[341]

The shared flesh Christ inherited from Mary is what enabled His sacrificial body to be encoded female, in addition to his innate maleness. The female body, which is inherently associated with sickness and sin, acted as the ideal tool to emulate how the body can be redeemed through Christian devotion. Therefore, the devotion of Christ's body and wounds act as a site of shared devotion to Christ and Mary: the maternal and the erotic become one in a paradoxical figure of gestation and virginity. This paradox breaks down constructions of the body and emphasises the redemptive nature of the flesh. Mary and Christ are exalted as both enclosed, intact bodies and opened vessels that bleed and lactate. These virgin martyrs imitate

[338] Joyce E. Salisbury, 'Witness, Women's Bodies, and the Body of Christ', in *Witness of the Body: The Past, Present, and Future of Christian Martyrdom*, ed. by Michael L. Budde and Karen Scott (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), pp. 63-81 (p. 89).
[339] 'St. Catherine', *Gilte Legende*, p. 905, II. 868-873.
[340] McCracken, 'Only Women Bleed', in *The Curse of Eve*, pp. 1-22.
[341] Bynum discusses how prior to 1200 unusual bodily changes, such as closures, openings or secretions were either reported more or considered more common especially in women. These changes were seen to parallel events in Christ's life or in the mass. See Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 187-188.

this image; they are also ‘enclosed’ intact bodies opened in both voice and flesh, bleeding milk and transmitting God’s Word.

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This chapter has challenged the argument that dismissed these virgin martyrs as merely 'enclosed vessel of God's Word'. Whereas men can appropriate their symbols of masculinity, the female body exemplifies the redemptive possibilities of the flesh. By reading the shared flesh of Mary and Christ as a genre of text, these virgin martyrs demonstrate how faith can redeem the cultural markers of the female flesh that deem it diseased and sinful. The inclusion of Mary in the veneration of Christ's flesh demonstrates the dynamism of imitation. As Mary's sinless flesh that Christ assumed reversed the sins of Eve, these virgin martyrs’ faith inverts images of sin to exalt the porous nature of the female body. These virgin martyrs unite and exemplify the conflicting image of medieval women; they are both enclosed and opened, highlighting how the flesh is equally a passage to sin as it is a pathway to redemption. With 'the Holy Ghost' inside them, these virgin martyrs are active teachers and preachers, who do not merely repeat the message of Christ but interpret, disseminate and protect it from male misinterpretation. However, virginity remains key to these virgin martyrs’ privilege in occupying multiple roles and participating in an active dialogue. The following chapter investigates how non-virginal women (that is, mother saints) connected with the shared flesh of Christ and Mary.

Chapter 3
Mitigating the 'Opened' Female Body in Fifteenth-Century Depictions of Mother Saints

> Dauid speke in this wise: 'Verrely we shull entre withinne the tabernacles of hym and worship the place where the fete of hym stode;' and I, right wreched sinner, am iuged worthi to kesse the [cre]che in whiche oure Lorde cried full litell, and in the pitte in whiche the Virgine bare God.[1]

Introduction

Jerome of Stridon (c. 347-420AD), in his *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios* (c. 387AD), wrote 'as long as woman is for birth and children, she is as different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called a man'.[2] The natural functions of the female body, such as menstruation, sexual penetration and childbirth, presented it as essentially porous and open.[3] As the default male body was considered dry and closed, the 'openness' of the female body led to a cultural narrative of it being a dangerous, permeable space that required control.[4] Due to the biological understanding of the female body, theological discourse valued the enclosed female body of virgins above those of married women and widows. Paradoxically, St. Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth, was a virgin martyr. Likewise, the most renowned figure of childbearing was the Virgin Mary, who retained her virginity after a painless and bloodless labour.[5]

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[1] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 134-141 (pp. 136-137, II. 82-86).
[2] Vern L. Bullough translation quoted in 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities,* ed. by Lees, Fenster and McNamara, pp. 31-46 (p. 32).
[3] Mary Harlow, 'In the Name of the Father: Procreation, Paternity, and Patriarchy', in *Thinking Men: Masculinity and Self-Representation in the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Lyn Foxhall and John Salmon (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 155-169 (p. 167). Also see this thesis's Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages', for a discussion on Hippocratic humoral theory which was the main biology understanding of the middle ages.
[4] Brown, *The Body and* Society, pp. 24-25, 48; Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, p. 77. For information on how spiritual guides available to anchoresses and laywomen, such as the *Ancrene Wisse* (c. 1225-1240), articulated how women's bodies were threatening, unknown spaces in need of supervision and regulation, see Clark, 'Producing the Devotional Body in Late Medieval Spiritual Guide for Women', in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. by Ashley and Clark, pp. 160-182. Also see the Introduction of this thesis, 'Gender in the Middle Ages', which establishes how the female medieval body was defined into two hierarchal models, the enclosed body and the opened body.
[5] Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 27; Ross, *Figuring the Feminine*, p. 111.

This chapter will examine fifteenth-century hagiographical depictions of mother saints to establish how the late middle ages represented childbirth and motherhood against its theological contextual background. The fifteenth century saw a rise in devotion related to Christ's humanity and the shared suffering that he and the Virgin Mary experienced. I will discuss four popular hagiographical texts of mother saints: Osbern Bokenham's 'Life of St. Anne' (c. 1443-1447), the Virgin Mary's mother; the *Gilte Legende's* (c. 1438) 'Life of St. Paula', a noble Roman widow, described by Palladius as having 'manly qualities', who had a close friendship with Jerome; the *Gilte Legende's* 'Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary', a wife and mother who desired to retain her virginity and took on voluntary poverty and extreme asceticism after her husband's death; and John Capgrave's *Life of St. Augustine* (c. 1450) which is primarily based on the *Confessions* (c. 397-400AD) and features an extensive narrative on St. Monica, the mother of Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430AD).[6] Alongside an assessment of these saintly mothers, I analyse three common narrative themes in the lives: the female body as a paradox, which is represented by the exaltation of these mother saints' bodies as an opened and enclosed space; the symbolism of blood and milk, which denotes the maternal and nourishment, and establishes genealogical lines among these mother saints, their children, Christ, and Mary; and the sacrificial nature of motherhood as a type of martyrdom that mirrors Mary's suffering.

[6] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames; 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 134-141; Elliott, 'Gender and Christian Traditions', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Bennet and Karras, pp. 22-33 (p. 25); Tertullian, 'Chapter XLI – Holy Women. in Palladius, *The Lausiac History* (1918) pp. 35-190. English Translation', *The Tertullian Project* (2003) <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/palladius_lausiac_02_text.htm#C41> [accessed 01 April 2020]; 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 842-854; Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500*, pp. 48-76, 99-228. Watt specifically mentions Osbern Bokenham's version of Elizabeth of Hungary/Thuringia's life and discusses how Margery Kempe mentions the treatise of St. Elizabeth in her *Book*. Although it is likely a reference to the Revelations of Elizabeth's great niece, Elizabeth of Toess (c. 1294-1336), there are clear parallels between Kempe's *Book* and Elizabeth's life; 'Life of Saint Augustine', in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine and St. Gilbert of Sempringham, and a Sermon*, ed. by J. J. Munro, EETS, Original Series no. 140 (London: The Early English Text Society, 1910), pp. 1-60.

Mother Saints and Mariology in the Late Middle Ages

The fifteenth century promoted an inclusive paradigm of holiness for women through the emergence of Middle English prose hagiographies of holy wives and mothers.[7] Fifteenth-century English hagiographers, such as John Capgrave, John Lydgate, and Osbern Bokenham, refashioned their saintly heroines, casting them in roles such as governor, head of house, reader, daughter, mother, and wife.[8] Saints were important figures in the daily lives of many medieval people, and hagiography would have been a familiar genre across the social classes.[9] Saints' lives could be read and were widely accessible through sermons and homilies.[10] Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul's extensive catalogue of Middle English prose sermons indicate that the saints and themes discussed in this chapter were the subject matter of a fair amount of surviving pastoral literature. The *Repertorium* lists nineteen sermons on St. Anne that exemplified her as a mother.[11] There are seven sermons on the Virgin Mary as Mother, to Christ and to 'all the saved as Eve was the mother of all those born in sorrow'.[12] Also, there are four sermons on the sanctity of marriage, including John Mirk's (c. 1382-1414) sermon, which exalted marriage as an institution not made by man 'but God in paradise'.[13] As models of

[7] Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature,* ed. by Strohm, pp. 335-351 (p. 344).
[8] Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, p. 178.
[9] Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature,* ed. by Wallace, pp. 610-634; Salih, 'Introduction: Saints, Cults and Lives in Late Medieval England', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography,* ed. by Salih, pp. 1-15, (p. 6); Lewis, The *Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval* England, p. 11.
[10] Lewis, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England,* p. 11.
[11] Veronica O'Mara, Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English prose sermons*: *Part 1: Introduction, and Cambridge University Library to London, British Library (Additional)*; *Part 2: London, British Library (Arundel) to London, Westminster Abbey Library*; *Part 3: Manchester, John Rylands University Library to Oxford, Bodleian Library*; *Part 4: Oxford, Hertford College to York, Borthwick Institute for Archives plus Indices* (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2007), part 1, BL/Add 36791/012, pp. 368-370, BL/Add 36791/035, pp. 407-409, BL/Add 36791/054, pp. 434-435, Part 2, BL/Claudius A.ii/004, pp. 930-931, BL/Claudius A.ii./014, pp. 947-949, BL/Claudius A.ii./051, pp. 1011-12, BL/Claudius A.ii./057, pp. 1022-24, British Library, Harley 2247/051, pp. 1162-64, British Library, Harley 2247/073, pp. 1188-1190, British Library, Harley 2268/004, pp. 1121-1123, British Library, Harley 2276/008, pp. 1236-1238, British Library, Harley 2321/001, pp. 1323-1324, British Library, Royal 18.B xxiii/04, pp. 1471-1472, British Library, Royal 18.B xxiii/005, pp. 1482-1483, British Library, Sloane 3160/030, pp. 1519-1520, part 3, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 96/021, pp. 1995-1996, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 96/042, pp. 2019-2020, Longleat 4/009, pp. 2500-2502, Longleat 4/057, pp. 2594-2597.
[12] O'Mara and Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English prose sermons*: *Part 1,* Part 1, 'BL/Claudius A.ii/069', pp. 1040-42.
[13] O'Mara and Paul, *A Repertorium,* Part 2, 'Longleat 4/057', pp. 2516-1.

imitation, the saint as wife and mother reflected an essential role in lay society, but this did not come without its issues.

From the twelfth century, opinions towards female piety changed, due to Mary's role in the history of salvation.[14] Mary's body was an essential site of Christ's hypostatic union, with her motherhood as proof of Christ's humanity and her intact virginity in childbirth as evidence of Christ's divinity.[15] During the late middle ages, as Christ's humanity was a central theme of devotion, attention to Mary and their relationship increased. This interest led to new approaches in thinking about scripture and Mary's role.[16] Rupert of Duetz's (c. 1076-1129) commentary on the Song of Songs (c. 1125) was the first Marian interpretation that pictured Mary as both mother and allegorical spouse of Christ.[17] Referring to Mary as the 'foundation', Deutz's reading demonstrated how Mary and Christ's lives were 'inextricably bound'.[18] The emphasis on Mary's motherhood and her sole creation of Christ's flesh through her own body led medieval people to believe that, through this mother-son relationship, they could be brought closer to salvation. Mary offered the lay audience something unique: a human selected and saved by God to fulfil divine deeds.[19] As Bernardino of Siena (c. 1380-1444) asserted, 'Mary had done more for God than God could do for himself'.[20]

Through the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, Mary became an independent subject in which 'pious imagination could run riot'.[21] Meditation on Mary occurred in both a communal setting during Marian feast days and private prayer, as indicated by the Little Office of the

[14] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 371-380; Clare Marie Snow, 'Mariology', *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Bjork, p. 1089.
[15] Snow, 'Mariology', p. 1089. For a general discussion about Christ's hypostatic union and the importance of the Virgin Mary during the Middle Ages, see this thesis's Introduction, 'Christ and Mary as Exemplars'.
[16] Snow, 'Mariology', p. 1089; Rubin, *Mother of God,* p. 159. Mariology is the study of Church tradition, scripture and theology that relates to Mary. The term Mariology as a distinct branch of theology was not formally used until the sixteenth century.
[17] Snow, 'Mariology', p. 1089; Rubin, *Mother of God,* p. 159.
[18] Ann. W. Astell, *Song of Songs in the Middle Age*s (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990) p. 44-45; Rubin, *Mother of God,* p. 160.
[19] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 76.
[20] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 182.
[21] Hilda Graef, *The Devotion to our Lady* (California: Hawthorn Books, 1963), p. 65.

Blessed Virgin in numerous Books of Hours.[22] This combination of prayer and work in both communal and enclosed settings demonstrated a developing and adapting spirituality for the needs of laywomen.[23] The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a rise in female mysticism, whereby more laywomen than before were articulating their spiritual experiences and union with God 'outside the cloister'.[24]

The representation of prophetesses and visionaries as wives, widows, and mothers was present throughout the late middle ages, in figures such as Christina of Markyate (c. 1096-1155), Marie d'Oignes (c. 1177-1213), Angela of Foligno (c. 1248-1309), Birgitta of Sweden (c. 1303-1373), Margery Kempe (c. 1373-1438) and Catherine of Genoa (c. 1447-1510).[25] However, female mystics', anchoress', and saints' marriages and families were often dismissed as unimportant stages of their lives. Their spiritual progress towards sainthood only occurred after the death of their husbands and the departure of their children.[26] Claudia Opitz commented that several medieval saints' lives 'read almost like antimaternal tracts'.[27] For example, Angela of Foligno's preface to the account of her holy visions thanked God for the epidemic that caused the death of her mother, husband and children, and enabled her to devote herself entirely to Him.[28] In looking at a wide selection of saints' lives of wives and mothers, marriage is rarely mentioned positively; instead, it is framed as a social obligation to which the saints had to conform.[29] André Vauchez noted that saints' lives hold a formulaic narrative which involved marriage (to avoid the wrath of their family); infrequent consummation (from which they

[22] Snow, 'Mariology', *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Bjork, p. 1089.
[23] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Age*, pp. 371-372.
[24] Vauchez explains that, prior to the twelfth century, with the exception of Hildegard of Bingen (c. 1098-1179), the only path to religious life available to women was entering a nunnery where their lives were hidden from the *vox populi* (the voice of the people). See Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Age*, p. 371.
[25] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 381; Voaden, *Women's Voices*, p. 85.
[26] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 204, 381.
[27] Claudia Opitz, 'Life in the Middle Ages', trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider, in *A History of Woman in the West, Volume II: Silences in the Middle Ages* ed. by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 267-318 (p. 288).
[28] Opitz, 'Life in the Middle Ages', p. 288.
[29] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 382.

derived no pleasure), increased periods of abstinence as they aged; occasionally persuading their husbands to abstain from intercourse after the birth of a number of children; and finally the death of the husband, which secured their liberty.[30] The formulaic pattern identified by Vauchez is apparent in more than half the saints' lives covered in this chapter – St. Birgitta, St. Paula, and St. Elizabeth. However, I would argue that the narratives of mother saints' hagiographies do not frame marriages and childrearing as unimportant life-stages or separate from their religious lives, but a vital part of understanding and articulating their devotion.

The Popularity and Formulaic Narratives of Mother Saints

After the Virgin Mary, St. Birgitta of Sweden is arguably the most influential and widely recognised mother saint of the middle ages. Birgitta was born in Uppland, Sweden in 1303, to the knight Birger Persson of the family Finsta, and his wife Ingeborg, of the Folkunga family. In 1316, at the age of thirteen, Birgitta and her sister Katarina were given in marriage to two noble brothers: Ulf and Magnus Gudmarrson of the Ulvåsa family. These arranged marriages aimed to consolidate the families' political and financial interests.[31] Birgitta's daughter Katarina Ulfsdotter testified at her canonisation that her mother had reluctantly entered the arrangement and would have 'preferred death to marriage'.[32]

There are two recorded surviving Middle English hagiographies of St. Birgitta: a fifteenth-century translation of the Archbishop Gregersson's *Officium Sanctae Brigittae* in the

[30] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 382. See Chapter Two of this thesis for a discussion on Vauchez's narrative theory in relation to virgin martyr saints.
[31] Bridget Morris, *Birgitta of Sweden* (Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 40-41.
[32] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, ed. by Isak Collijn (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1924-1931), p. 305. Also see Tore Nyberg, 'The Canonization Process of St. Birgitta of Sweden', in *Procés de canonization au Moyen Âge – Medieval Canonization Processes*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay (Rome: École française de Rome, 2004), pp. 67-85. Katerina Ulfsdotter (1332-1381) also lived a devout life as a follower of her mother and was the first abbess of the Brigittine mother house at Vadstena. Katerina was venerated as a saint in 1484, confirmed by Pope Innocent VIII. See Thomas A. DuBois, 'St. Katarina in Her Own Light', in *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Thomas A. DuBois (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 271-303; S. Patricia O. SS. S., 'Karin Ulfsdotter', in *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order*, ed. by James Hogg, vol. 1 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1997), pp. 91-107.

British Library MS Claudius B I and a sixteenth-century printed adaptation of a Swedish life for an English audience titled 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette', published by Richard Pynson in 1516.[33] The British Library MS Claudius B I 'A Life of St. Bridget' is a short text that does not mention the reasons for St. Birgitta's marriage. She is described as a pious wife who converted her husband to a life of chastity and taught her children in line with the Christian faith.[34] St. Birgitta desired to live as a virgin but was unable, due to her noble lineage and arranged marriage.[35] At Birgitta's request, she lived chastely with her husband for two years after their wedding. When the couple had sexual relations, they would pray to God 'that in the acte of matrymony he wolde kepe theym without offence', which resulted in four sons and four daughters.[36] In 1344 Birgitta's husband died, and she became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, where she lived in chaste widowhood for the rest of her life.[37]

Thomas Gascoigne's (c. 1404-1458) translation does not treat St. Birgitta's marriage and children as an inconvenience endured before her religious vocation, but as an essential part of it. Each of her children has a paragraph dedicated to them and their spiritual journeys.[38] The death of her husband also coincided with a visitation from the Virgin Mary and Christ. Three years before the death of her husband, the Virgin Mary visited Birgitta and showed her a vision

[33] There is debate over who is the author of the Pynson's printed edition. John Henry Blunt's edited edition claims it was likely written by Thomas Gascoigne (1401-1458), during his time at Oxford University. In Gascoigne's Theological Dictionary found in the Bodleian Library, Digby 172B, he refers to a translation of St. Birgitta's life he compiled for the Sisters of Syon Abbey. See *The Myroure of Oure Ladye, containing a devotional treatise on divine service, with a translation of the offices used by the sisters of the Brigittine Monastery of Sion, at Isleworth, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries*, ed. by John Henry Blunt, EETS, Extra Series 1867-1920 no. 19 (London: Early English Text Society, 1893), p. ix. See also Ann Hutchison and Veronica O'Mara, 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette: An Edition of a Swedish Saint's Life for an English Audience', in *Booldly Bot Meekly: Essays on Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages in Honour of Roger Ellis* ed. by Catherine Batt and René Tixier (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2018), pp. 173-208. 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette' is included in the English printed volume of *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande* (1516) but not the Latin original. Hutchinson and O'Mara speculate that Syon Abbey may have influenced the inclusion of the 'Lyfe'. The text includes an explanation as to why Birgitta's life has been included, which describes her as a 'holy and blessyd wydowe' whose life should follow as an example, especially for those in the estates of matrimony and widowhood.

[34] 'A Life of St. Bridget: Translated from Archbishop Gregersson's *Officium Sanctae Birgittae*' in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden, Volume 1*, ed. by Roger Ellis, EETS, Original Series no. 291 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1987), pp. 1-5.

[35] *The Myroure of Oure Ladye,* p. xlviii; Hutchison and O'Mara, 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette', p. 192.

[36] *The Myroure of Oure Ladye,* p. xlviii; Hutchison and O'Mara, 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette', p. 192.

[37] Morris, *Birgitta of Sweden,* pp. 42-50.

[38] *The Myroure of Oure Ladye,* pp. xlix-li; Hutchison and O'Mara, 'The Lyfe of Seynt Birgette, pp. 193-195.

of Christ suffering on the cross. After the death of her husband, Christ appeared to Birgitta and told her not to be afraid, as the 'spirit of God stirrid hir'.[39]

Birgitta's visions formed her religious vocation. From the age of ten, she experienced revelations from Christ, which increased in frequency as she got older. Her confessors, Peter Olafsson (c. 1307-1390), Prior of Alvastra, and Alfonsa Pescha (c. 1327-1389), the bishop of Jaén, compiled these revelations during her life and after her death. The *Revelations* of St. Birgitta is one of the most influential works of Swedish medieval literature. Birgitta's reputation was internationally recognised, and her *Revelations* were translated into several European vernaculars.[40] Although there is little surviving evidence of Middle English versions of St. Birgitta's hagiographies, we are aware of her reputation as a role model through her own work and the sermons preached about her. As seen in surviving Middle English hagiographies, the narrative arch conformed to the basic formula described by Vauchez. However, contextually Birgitta's vita was shaped by her *Revelations*. Her visions of Mary during her difficult labours and her husband's sickness and eventual death show how the Virgin Mary influenced the articulation of her piety through her experiences of motherhood and marriage.

Similarly, St. Paula's *vita* aligns with the formulaic narrative noted by Vauchez. Paula's *vita* appeared in the widely circulated Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1259-1266) and all four surviving Middle English adaptations; the fourteenth-century Vernon *Golden Legend* in the Bodleian Library MS, eng. Poet a. 1, which consisted of eight legends from the *Legenda Aurea* in a rhyming couplet format; the 1438 *Gilte Legende*, a translation of Voragine's Latin text and Jean de Vignay's French adaptation of the *Legenda Aurea*; Osbern Bokenham's translation, the *Abbotsford Legenda Aurea* (c. 1450-1455), and William Caxton's

[39] 'A Life of St. Bridget: Translated from Archbishop Gregersson's *Officium Sanctae Birgittae*' *Sweden*, in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, pp. 3-4, II. 37-38.
[40] *The Translation of the Works of St. Birgitta of Sweden Into the Medieval European Vernaculars*, ed. by Bridget Morris and Veronica M O'Mara (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2000).

1483 edition entitled 'St. Pauline, the widow'.[41] All of these editions followed Jacobus of Voragine's original, excerpted from 'St. Jerome Letter 108 to Eustochium' (c. 404AD), which Jerome wrote to console Eustochium, Paula's daughter, after her mother's death. St. Jerome's letter is considerably longer than the *Legenda Aurea's* account and detailed Paula's early life in Rome, her pilgrimages, her conversion, and her early life as a Christian ascetic.[42] Significantly, it established Paula's nobility in both lineage and sanctity. The *Gilte Legende's vita* of St. Paula copied this format. Like St. Birgitta, Paula's nobility forced her to wed and bear children. After giving birth to Ruffina, the text stated she would have 'lefte beryng as she that wolde no more serue to [do] the office of marriage, but she hadde obeyed to the will of her husband that desired to haue an eyre male.'[43] Paula had no desire for sexual intercourse with her husband Toxotius, but only obeyed his will to produce a male heir, thus presenting her as living in a chaste marriage.[44] As a descendant of the Roman clan of Furii Camil, she was fulfilling her marriage debt to continue the male line and thus avoid any familial strife.[45]

From the second stanza, her lineage is compared to her faith. The life explains how 'this same here hadde .v. children' and goes on to discuss Paula's children Blesilla, Pammachius, Eustochium, Rufina, and Toxocious.[46] The interjection that 'this same woman' of virtue also bore five children underscores the tension in exalting wives and mothers as

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[41] *Jerome's Epitaph on Paula: Commentary on the Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae*, ed. and trans. by Andrew Cain (Oxford: Oxford Early Christian Texts, 2013); Winstead, 'Fear in Late-Medieval English Martyr Legends', in *More than a Memory*, ed. by Leemans, pp. 201-220 (p. 202); E. Gordon Whatley, '*Legenda Aurea* in translation in Medieval Europe', in *Traduction: Encyclopedie Internationale de la Recherche sur la Traduction*, ed. by Harald Kittel, Juliane House and Brigitte Schultze (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 1345-1354 (p. 1347). Published last year as part of the Early English Text Society series, see also William Caxton, *The Golden Legend. Vol. I*, ed. by Mayumi Taguchi, John Scahill and Satoko Tokunaga (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[42] 'St. Jerome, Letter 108: to Eustochium', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Second Series, ed. by Schaff and Wace, trans. by Fremantle, Lewis and Martley. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Letters of St. Jerome: Letter 108: To Eustochium', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001108.htm> [accessed 1 April 2020].

[43] St. Paula' *Gilte Legende*, p. 135, II. 27-30.

[44] For further information about medieval marriage see the section, 'The Christianisation of Medieval Marriage'.

[45] T. S. M. Mommaerts, D. H. Kelley, 'The Anicii of Gaul and Rome', in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, ed. by John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 111-121 (pp. 120-21).

[46] 'St. Paula' *Gilte Legende*, p. 125, II. 21-28.

saints.[47] However, it also shows how the same body that participated in sexual intercourse and endured childbirth was also virtuous and faithful. In fact, St. Paula was nobler in her holiness and devotion than by her lineage: '[Paula] was noble of kynde but moche more noble of faith and bi holynesse'.[48] The comparison of Paula's faith to her lineage acts as a relatable social metaphor; it elevates the importance of devotion outside social duty.

The *Gilte Legende's vita* of St. Elizabeth of Hungary used the same tropes to explain her marriage and motherhood. St. Elizabeth of Hungary (c. 1207-1231) was widely known in Europe as her *vita* was disseminated throughout Western Christendom by Jacobus of Voragine in his Latin sermons that borrowed from his *Legenda Aurea*.[49] St. Elizabeth's life also featured in two of the Middle English translations of the text, the *Gilte Legende,* and Caxton's English adaptation.[50] The *Gilte Legende*'s portrayal of Elizabeth employed language similar to that used for St. Paula. It states that Elizabeth was the 'doughter of the noble King of Hungry, and yef she were right noble bi kinrede she was moche more noble bi faithe and religion'.[51] Like Paula, Elizabeth's faith is above her nobility, offering readers a relatable metaphor to understand the extent of Elizabeth's calling to religious life.

St. Elizabeth's pious nature is praised throughout her life. As she aged, her devotion grew as 'she chase the Uirgine Marie moder of God to her souerayne ladi and to her aduocat, and Seint Iohn the euuangelist for to be keper of her uirginity.'[52] Despite her pledge to keep

[47] *Women of the Gilte Legende: A Selection of Middle English Saints Lives*, trans. by Larissa Tracy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 1-2.
[48] 'St. Paula' *Gilte Legende,* p. 134, II. 1-6.
[49] Linda Burke, 'A Sister in the World: Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in the *Golden Legend*', *Hungarian Historical Review*, 5, 3 (2016), 509-535 (pp. 509). As the most copied book in the middle ages after the Bible, over a thousand manuscripts have been catalogued of the *Legenda Aurea*.
[50] Simon Horobin argues that Elizabeth's life was likely part of Osbern Bokenham's translation of *the Legenda Aurea* but is missing from the Abbotsford MS due to lost leaves. See Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 941. For more on the *Legenda Aurea* see Sherry Reames, *The 'Legenda Aurea': a Re-examination of its Paradoxical History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Jacques Le Goff and Lydia G. Cochrane, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and the Golden Legend* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
[51] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende,* p. 842, II. 1-3.
[52] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende,* p. 843, II. 30-33.

her virginity, the decision to marry and bear children was not in St. Elizabeth's hands (a common theme in lives of mother saints'). The text stated she was 'constreined for to entre into mariage bi her fader, that greatly desired for to haue fruit of her, notwithstanding that it was ful gretli ayenst her will, but she durst not withsaie the commaundment of her fader'.[53] Elizabeth was married to the Landgrave of Thuringia so that her father could continue the royal line through the 'fruit' of her womb. In marriage, both men and women had to perform the 'debt' of matrimony to produce the 'goods' of marriage, children.[54] Despite these mother saints' desires to be chaste, they entered into marriage out of obedience. The sacrificial nature of motherhood shows how the figure of the Virgin Mary, who made her own sacrifices in bearing Christ and witnessing his death, aided women in understanding and expressing their piety.[55]

Throughout this chapter, I will discuss mother saints' relationships with the Virgin Mary and how their experiences of motherhood did not hinder their devotion but were a prominent factor in their piety. As the previous chapter discussed, although hagiography offered a wide representation of gendered lay and religious identities, the condition of womanhood remained divided and hierarchal in medieval thought. Virginity was ranked highest, followed by widowhood, and lastly marriage.[56] Although virginity was the highest order of female sanctity, those who chose to enter religious life and remain virgins were a small minority compared to those who married and became mothers.[57] Cultural understandings of

[53] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 844, II. 57-60; Vauchez comments that Elizabeth of Hungary's life is a prime example of the disparagement of married life in saints' lives during the Later Middle Ages. Pre-canonization St. Elizabeth of Hungary's (Thuringia) life suggested that the saint had entered into the marriage for love and held her husband in great affection. After 1330, the union is rewritten as a contract entered unwillingly that neither party found satisfactory. See Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Late Middle Ages*, p. 383.
[54] Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Woman: A Social History of Women in England 450-1500*, 4th edn. (London: Orion Books, 2002), pp. 93-95.
[55] For a further discussion on motherhood as a form of sacrifice, see the section 'Motherhood as Martyrdom'.
[56] Anke Bernau, 'Gender and Sexuality', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 104-121 (p. 104, p. 115); *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*, trans. by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), pp. 233, 414.
[57] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 93.

medieval marriage and motherhood were a complex blend of clerical and lay practices and beliefs embedded amongst an evolving theological discourse.[58]

The Christianisation of Medieval Marriage

In the twelfth century, marriage became a sacrament that emphasised the necessity and importance of marriage for the laity while condemning clerical marriage or concubinage.[59] Marriage was established in canon law in the first half of the twelfth century by the jurist Gratian (c. 1100-1159), in his legal textbook the *Decretum Gratiani* (c. 1140).[60] Canons 51 and 52 of the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council defined the constitution of marriage. Canon 51 evoked St. Paul's words in Corinthians on bodily control and restrictions on who one can and cannot marry. Canon 52 explained what happened to a couple engaged to be married: they were publicly announced in the church by a priest who investigated if there were any impediments, for if a person entered into a forbidden marriage, their children would be deemed illegitimate.[61] Although marriage was considered a legal and theologically legitimate means to reproduce, the cultural discourse of the female body placed it within a hierarchal social system. Jerome praised wedlock only because it produced virgins. In his letter to Eustochium, the virgin daughter of St. Paula, Jerome wrote: 'to show that virginity is natural while wedlock only follows guilt, what is born of wedlock is virgin flesh, and it gives back in fruit what in root it has lost'.[62] The

[58] Simon Gaunt observed, 'vernacular hagiography is likely to reflect a mixture of clerical and popular values.' See Gaunt, 'Saints, Sex, and community: Hagiography', in *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, pp. 180-234 (pp. 181-182). The chapter provides an overview of medieval vernacular and Latin hagiography.

[59] Before the twelfth century, the Gregorian Reform attempted to categorise and regulate sexuality, making it taboo for clerics and only appropriate for the married laity. Treatises and sermons written by Gregorian reformers framed marriage in a negative light, as discussed in Chapter One. Also see Bernau, 'Gender and Sexuality', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 104-107; Anke Bernau, 'Virginal effects: Text and Identity in the *Ancrene Wisse*', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. by Riches and Salih, pp. 36-48 (pp. 37-38).

[60] 'Sex and Marriage in the *Decretum* of Gratian', in James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 229-255.

[61] The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, 'Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215', *Fordham University* (1996-2020) <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp> [accessed 01 April 2020].

[62] 'St. Jerome, Letter 22: to Eustochium', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, ed. by Schaff and Wace, trans. by Fremantle, Lewis and Martley. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available

passage echoes Jerome's description of virginity in *Against Jovinianus* (c. 393AD), which described it as the fruit to the tree, the grain to the straw.[63] Whilst virginity is a woman's customary biological state, marriage and motherhood is a state of sacrifice, loss, but also of regeneration.

In response to Jerome's *Against Jovinianus*, Augustine wrote a series of treatises on the three estates of womanhood: virginity, marriage and widowhood. Augustine's *On the Good of Marriage* (c. 401AD) heralded the union between husband and wife as the first natural bond of society and used God's command to 'increase and multiply' to legitimise matrimonial intercourse for procreation.[64] By citing St. Paul, Augustine referred to marital chastity (abstinence except for procreational purposes) as 'God's Gift'. Augustine offered a clear ranking of womanhood. The highest state was virginity, for 'no fruitfulness of the flesh can be compared to holy virginity'.[65] Widows had 'a better place, than a married woman, among the members of Christ'.[66] Augustine wanted to demonstrate that virginity could be praised without devaluing the importance of marriage and motherhood in society. With Jerome excepted, this

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at: St. Jerome, 'Letters of St. Jerome: Letter 22: To Eustochium', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> [accessed 6 January 2019] (para. 19).

[63] 'St. Jerome, Against Jovinianus (Book 1)', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, ed. by Schaff and Wace, trans. by Fremantle, Lewis and Martley. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Against Jovinianus (Book 1)', *New Advent* (2020) <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30091.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (para. 3).

[64] 'St. Augustine, Of the Good of Marriage', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Cornish. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'Of the Good of Marriage', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1309.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020].

[65] 'St. Augustine, Of Holy Virginity', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Cornish. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'Of Holy Virginity', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1310.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (para. 8).

[66] 'St. Augustine, Of the Good of Widowhood', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Cornish. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'Of the Good of Widowhood', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1311.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (para. 4). Also see 'St. Augustine, City of God (Book XIV)', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Dods. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'The City of God (Book XIV)', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (chap. 21).

reflected the general view of the Church fathers: all sex, except for the sake of procreation, was sinful, or 'carnal' and practiced only 'for the satisfying of lust'.[67]

During the twelfth century, anti-matrimonial rhetoric was re-evaluated, during the emergence of the cult of the Virgin Mary, in which Christ's humanity and his relationship with Mary became focal points of devotion for clerical and lay communities.[68] Through selective use of Augustine's treatise, the spiritual and consensual nature of the marriage bond, which existed separately from sex, was emphasised. Hugh of St. Victor (c. 1096-1141) used the union of Mary and Joseph to exemplify marriage not as a sacrament created to overcome the Fall, but as an institution that existed before sin entered the world.[69] Peter Lombard (c. 1096-1160) continued the Augustine ideology in his twelfth-century theological book *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum.* Sexual intercourse was part of God's original plan for Adam and Eve to 'increase and multiply'; the problem after the Fall was therefore not sex, but that it was no longer possible without lust.[70] Using Augustine's *The City of God* (c. 413-426AD) as a reference point, Peter Lombard explained:

> If the first human had not sinned there would have been Carnal Union in Paradise, without any sin or stain, and they would have been an undefiled bed (Hebrews 13:4) there and union without concupiscence. Furthermore, they would have commanded the genital organs like other organs so they would have not felt any unlawful movements there. Just as we moved some bodily members towards others such as the hand to the mouth without the order of lust, likewise they would have used the genital organs without any issues of the flesh.[71]

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[67] 'St. Augustine, Of the Good of Marriage', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Cornish. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'Of the Good of Marriage', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1309.htm> [accessed 01 April 2020] (para. 6).
[68] Elliott, 'Gender and Christian Traditions', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Bennet and Karras, pp. 28-29.
[69] Sara McDougall, 'Women and Gender in Canon Law', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Bennet and Karras, pp. 163-176; Hugh of St. Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. by Roy Deferrari (Cambridge: Mediaeval Academy, 1951), pp. 332, 325-27; Penny Gold, 'The Marriage of Mary and Joseph in the Twelfth-Century Ideology of Marriage', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo: Pantheon Books, 1982), pp. 102-117.
[70] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 94.
[71] Peter Lombard cited and translated in Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 24-5; 'St. Augustine, City of God (Book XIV)', in *Nicene*

By describing sexual intercourse as a subconscious act akin to touching your mouth with your hand, Peter Lombard separated the body from the flesh. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a noted difference between the body and the flesh in late medieval thought. The body was considered a weak vessel controlled by the 'power of the flesh'.[72] The flesh was not innately evil, but a site that manifested human nature, propelling it towards sin, such as adultery, drunkenness, idolatry, etc. In *The City of God,* Augustine explained that sin occurred due to the corruption of the soul during the Fall. Therefore, the separation of the flesh and soul is punishment for the first sin committed by Adam and Eve. The body is drawn to vice due to the flesh's corruption, which burdens the soul.[73] However, despite being a weak vessel, the body is also a vehicle for redemption.[74] The notion of redemption tied in with Peter of Lombard's amendment of Augustinian thought in medieval culture. In continuing the argument that prelapsarian sex would have existed without lust and therefore without sin, Peter of Lombard implied that God ordained sexual union between man and woman. The body is offered a redemptive clause for its weakness towards sexual acts. As St. Paul said in Corinthians 7:3-6,

> The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command.[75]

and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Dods. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'City of God (Book XIV)', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm> [accessed 10 April 2020] (chap. 22, 23, and 24).

[72] Brown, *The Body and* Society, pp. 24-25, 48.

[73] 'St. Augustine, City of God (Book XIV)', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, ed. by Schaff, trans. by Dods. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Augustine, 'City of God (Book XIV)', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm> [accessed 10 April 2020] (chap. 2 and 3).

[74] Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 432-447.

[75] 1 Corinthians 7:3-6.

The Augustinian approach offered a legitimate place for sexual intercourse in a controlled, clearly defined space. The Christianisation of marriage as a sacrament promoted it as a good Christian practice, which in turn sanctified procreation. However, the hierarchal aspect of the female body and their aligning social roles still created a divide in the description of childbirth. The reverence for virginity overshadowed the sanctity of marriage. In turn, devotional texts' and hagiographies' depiction of childbirth did not reflect the lived reality of medieval women.

Childbirth and the Saints

Childbirth was a fraught time for married women due to the high mortality rate, which ranged from between thirty to sixty per cent depending on class status.[76] The thirteenth-century tract on virginity *Hali Meiðhad* painted a gruesome picture of pregnancy. The text informed its readers that 'Al is with a weolewunge thi wlite overwarpen, thi muth is bitter, ant walh al thet tu cheowest' [your beauty is completely ruined with wilting, your mouth is bitter, and all that you chew nauseating].[77] Alongside losing their beauty and sense of taste, the female audience also had to worry about the 'non-stop suffering' of childbirth:

> Inwith al thi weole ant ti weres wunne forwurthest a wrecche. The cares ayein thi pinunge thraen bineometh the nahtes slepes. Hwen hit thenne therto kimeth, thet sore sorhfule angoise, thet stronge ant stikinde stiche, thet unroles uvel, thet pine over pine, thet wondrinde yeomerunge, hwil thu swenchest terwith ant thine deathes dute.[78]
>
> [In the middle of all your happiness and your husband's joy you degenerate into a wretch. The worries about your labour pains deprive you of sleep at night. Then when it comes to it, that sore sorrowful anguish, that strong and stabbing stitch, that nonstop suffering, that pain above pain, that restless wailing, while you labour with it and with fear of your death.]

[76] Carole Hill, 'Here Be Dragons': The Cult of St. Margaret of Antioch and Strategies for Survival', in *Art, Faith, and Place in East Anglia: From Prehistory to the Present*, ed. by T. A. Heslop, Elizbaeth Mellings and Margit Thøfner (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), pp. 105-116 (pp. 106-107).
[77] 'Hali Meithhad', in *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertson, 27:11.
[78] 'Hali Meithhad', 27:13-15.

The grotesque imagery focused on pain, suffering and death. Birth is described in stark contrast to the idealised birth of Christ, where Mary experienced a painless, bloodless labour, and retained her virginity. *Hali Meiðhad*, which is part of the Katherine Group text in MS Bodley, was written to encourage virginity. Like the *Ancrene Wisse* (c. 1225-1240), the text instructed maidens to protect their bodies from the sins of the flesh. As previously discussed, *Hali Meiðhad* used a hierarchy model to exalt virginity above widowhood and marriage.[79] The sins of the flesh are called Babylon's folk, the devil's army of Hell, the devil's arrows, and the devil's eldest daughter, who made war against the body and dragged women into the 'world's bondage', slavery.[80] The same terminology is used to describe sexual intercourse that aligned it with shame, sin, and immorality: 'thet bestelich gederunge, thet scheomelese sompnunge, thet ful of fulthe stinkinde ant untohe dede' [that beastly gathering, that shameless union, that stinking and wanton deed full of filth].[81] In comparison, virginity is described as a 'tresor thet, beo hit eanes forloren, ne bith hit neaver ifunden; meithhad is the blostme thet, beo ha fulliche eanes forcorven, ne spruteth ha eft neaver' [treasure that once it be lost, may never be found; maidenhood is that blossom that, once it be fully cut, never sprouts afterward].[82] Whereas the body of motherhood is associated with sacrifice and loss, the virgin body is 'bute bruche' [without breach] and aligned with the 'worldes alesendnesse' [world's redemption].[83]

These descriptions of the female body aligned the virgin body with enclosure and the childbearing body with permeability and openness. As previously discussed, the Hippocratic theory of the four humours described the female body as porous and open. Whereas male bodies were dry and closed, female bodies were spongier and open due to menstruation, sexual

[79] 'Hali Meithhad', in *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertson, 2:2.
[80] 'Hali Meithhad', 1:14, 2:5. Lechery and lust are considered the devil's child and Sin her mother, 10:4, Pride and arrogance are called devil's eldest daughter, 35:1.
[81] 'Hali Meithhad', 7:.3.
[82] 'Hali Meithhad', 8:6.
[83] 'Hali Meithhad', 8:9.

penetration and childbirth. Female bodily waste, such as menstrual blood and the female seed, were considered lethal, dangerous and 'out of place', escaping the natural borders of the body that normally contained it.[84] Describing the female body as 'open' demoted it to a dangerous, permeable space that needed to be controlled.[85] As discussed in the first chapter, by exalting virginity, a narrative was established that the female body was an 'open' vessel, susceptible to sin, and in need of protection from external influences.[86] Whereas the body of motherhood is shamed, it is the virgin body that is described as similar to Christ and follows in the Virgin Mary's footsteps.[87] The *Hali Meiðhad* was written for a devout audience, who were likely considering or had already taken a vow of virginity. Aligning childbirth and the body of motherhood with theological abjection is a difficult and unsustainable position.[88]

The prospect of dying in a state considered theologically polluted stemmed from the Old Testament.[89] Women were considered 'unclean' during and after childbirth until churching occurred, where the 'blood' could be purified.[90] Women's blood signified the suffering inflicted on women as a result of Original Sin – the 'curse of Eve'.[91] The ritual of purification,

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[84] For a detailed explanation on the cultural coding of substances as polluting or dangerous, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[85] Harlow, 'In the Name of the Father: Procreation, Paternity, and Patriarchy', in *Thinking Men*, ed. by Foxhall and Salmon, p. 167.
[86] Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, p. 77. Spiritual guides such as the *Ancrene Wisse* devoted chapters on instructing women how to guard their 'bodily sites', such as the ears, nose, and mouth, and metaphorically referred to the anchorhold as a woman's body to ensure enclosure in 'all areas'. The idea of enclosure being linked to virginity led to female ascetics fasting, to prevent menstruation, and enduring great physical hardship to imitate the dry and closed body of man. In this thesis, see Chapter Two, fn. 226.
[87] 'Hali Meithhad', in *The Katherine Group MS Bodley 34*, ed. by Huber and Robertson, 9:5
[88] 'Introduction to the Katherine Group: Audience', in *The Katherine Group*. Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne have emphasized the number of texts that influenced the *Hali Meithhad.* See *Hali Meithhad*, ed. by Bella Millett, EETS, Original Series, no. 284 (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. xxx, xxxiii and *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Millett and Wogan-Browne, p. xv. The *Hali Meithad* begins with Psalm 45, which was originally directed at new brides to explain their responsibilities towards their husband's family. St. Jerome also began his letter to Eustochium, St. Paula's daughter, in this manner to stress the importance of the virgin's vocation. Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1997), p. 147.
[89] Hill, 'Here Be Dragons', in *Art, Faith, and Place in East Anglia*, ed. by Heslop, Mellings and Thøfner, pp. 105-116 (pp. 106-107).
[90] Leviticus 12:1-8.
[91] McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, p. 2. McCracken notes that although women's blood was in the private sphere and was regarded as a pollutant that did both symbolic and practical harm, there were positive meanings for women's bleeding in medieval cultural, such as for medicinal purposes. It is also important to note that although

or churching, occurred during a woman's first visit to church after the birth of her child.[92] This differed according to the sex of the baby: women were unclean for forty days after the birth of a son and eighty days after a daughter.[93] Although theologically there is no reason for this, there are theories that culturally it was due to women's association with Eve and the belief that it took longer for female foetal bodies to form.[94] In medieval England, there is no evidence that these different quarantines were employed. Regardless of the gender of the child, purification typically took place a month after birth.[95] Likewise, the tradition differed throughout regions and could include ritual bathing, offering a candle to the Virgin, and blessing the new mother with holy water. St. Elizabeth of Hungary's *vita* purification demonstrated her grace and humility, as portrayed in the *Gilte Legende*:

> She wolde not arraie herself with precious stones as other dede in the day of the Purificacion, ne clothe her with no clothe of golde, but bi the ensaumple of the Uirgine Marie she wolde bere her sone in her armes and a lambe and a candell and

women were considered 'the daughters of Eve' who bore her curse from the fall, the blame of Original Sin does not fall entirely on Eve. The subject of Adam and Eve and Original Sin is complex. Some consider Eve entirely to blame; others believe it was Adam's fault for not informing Eve that she should not eat the fruit; and another school of thought splits the blame with Eve taking the brunt, for her sin consists of both pride and eating the fruit, whereas Adam only sinned in eating the fruit. See Christine Peters, 'Eve and the Responsibility for Sin' and 'Adam's Fall' in Peters, *Patterns of Piety*, pp. 130-153, pp. 294-313; Ellis, *Gilte Legende*, pp. 189-91; Brian Murdoch, *The apocryphal Adam and Eve in Medieval Europe: vernacular translations and adaptions of the Vitae Adae and Evae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Brian Murdoch, *Adam's Grace: Fall and Redemption in Medieval Literature* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000); Ian McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: a meditation on the Christian doctrine of original sin* (Maldon: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. by Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014); Stephen F. Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, 'Original Sin', in *The A to Z of Medieval Philosophy and Theology* (Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2010), pp. 206-208; Stephen Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017); Malcolm Potts, Roger Short, *Ever Since Adam and Eve: The evolution of human sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[92] Paula M. Rieder, 'Churching', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 140-141.

[93] *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, ed. by Rolf Rendtorff, Robert A. Krugler and Sarah Smith Barlett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 430; in John Mirk's sermon on the Purification of Mary, he claims that the timeline for girls is twice as long due to Eve's sin. See 'Homily 14: De Purificacione Beate Marie et Eius Solempnitate', in *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus (John Mirk)*, ed. by Theodor Erbe, EETS, Extra Series 1867-1920 no. 96 (London: Early English Text Society by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1905), pp. 56-62 (p. 57, II. 26-35).

[94] Rieder, 'Churching', p. 140.

[95] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 130; Anne Stensvold, *A History of Pregnancy in Christianity: From Original Sin to Contemporary Abortion Debates* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 40-52.

> offre it up mekely so that thereby she shewed that the bobaunce and iapes of the worlde were for to be putte awey.[96]

This passage is the first of only three mentions of St. Elizabeth's children in her *vita*. However, the focus is not on Elizabeth's unnamed son or motherhood, but how she acted during her service. Elizabeth's modest dress and meekness, considering her status as royalty, imitated the Virgin Mary's humble act of purification. Although based on Old Testament taboos concerning menstruation, evidence suggests that medieval women did not treat the purification as a reminder of their sinful nature and permeable, opened bodies. Records show that for several of Queen Eleanor's (c. 1241-1290) purifications, fine music, candles, a splendid feast, almsgiving, and celebration were the order of the day, implying it was a time of thanksgiving and sharing in the Virgin Mary's maternity.[97]

The *Trotula* treatises highlighted the significance of a shared maternal network between Mary, the saints, and the lay community. These texts on uterine and birth-related conditions were composed in Southern Italy in the twelfth century. The treatises were translated into various vernacular languages until the end of the middle ages, which indicates their popularity as medical texts in western Europe.[98] The Middle English translation of the *Tortula major*, titled *The Knowing of Woman's Kind in Childing,* showed remarkable sympathy for women.[99] Menstruation is considered part of the natural order; women are not a secondary creation to

[96] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende,* p. 844, II. 84-90.
[97] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 130. Queen Eleanor was the wife of Henry III.
[98] Monica H. Green, 'Gynaecology and obstetrics', *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Bjork, pp. 757-758; Monica Green, 'Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe', in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Judith M. Bennett, Elizabeth A. Clark, Jean F. O'Barr and B. Anne Vilen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 39-78. For discussions of the Trotula author see *The Trotula: A Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine*, ed. and trans. by Monica H. Green (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 127-129; Green, 'Making Motherhood in Medieval England: The Evidence from Medicine', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 173-206 (pp. 172-3); Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 102.
[99] This extract is from Oxford Bodley MS Douce 37, ed. by Alexandra Barrett. The text is a compilation of the twelfth to thirteenth century Latin text the *Cum auctor*, which is also known as the *Tortula Major*. Due to the number of surviving manuscripts it is likely the text was widely circulated during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Alexandra Barrett, 'Middle English Trotula Texts', in *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Alexandra Barrett (Harlow: Longman, 1992), pp. 25-39 (pp. 25-26).

man; and humoral theory is blended with Genesis to produce an origin story free from misogyny.[100] Yet the most extraordinary segment of the text is the insinuation that saints have shared the problems of women:

> And yf hit fall any man to rede hit, I pray hym and scharge hym in Oure Lady behalve that he rede hit not in no dyspyte ne sclaundure of no woman, ne for no cause but for the hele and helpe of heme, dredynge that vengauns myth fall to hym as hit hath do to other that have scheuyd here prevytees in sclaundyr of hem; undyrstondynge in certeyne that they have no other evyls that nou be alyve than thoo women hade that nou be seyntys in hevyn.[101]

Henrietta Leyser referred to this as a theological *sequitur,* that urged men to regard women as free from impurity.[102] It also demonstrates the strong spiritual network of support in the form of the Virgin and the saints, to whom mothers would have been encouraged to offer prayers during pregnancy and difficult labours.[103]

There is considerable evidence of mothers interacting with saints in their shared experiences. The iconography of the cult of St. Margaret and the celebratory imagery of the three Marys and their seven sons showed the saints as 'venerated exemplars of successful motherhood'.[104] St. Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth, was thought to have powers of

[100] Barrett, 'Middle English Trotula Texts', pp. 28-31; Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, pp. 100-101.
[101] Barrett, 'Middle English Trotula Texts', pp. 29-31.
[102] Leyser, *Medieval Woman,* p. 101.
[103] Leyser, *Medieval Woman,* p. 128.
[104] Hill, 'Here Be Dragons', in *Art, Faith, and Place in East Anglia*, ed. by Heslop, Mellings and Thøfner, p. 111. Hill looks at iconography in Norfolk, in particular the pew carving of St. Margaery in St. Helen's Church at the Great Hospital of Norwich, which was commissioned by the hospital master John Hecker (1519-32). Positioning the carving in the nave would have made it accessible to congregational women. The same location also offers a depiction of St. Margaret and the dragon in a ceiling boss, where she figures as a satellite to an image of the Virgin, suggesting a strong parallel between the Virgin's redemptive flesh and the redeemed flesh of St. Margaret. St. Margaret also appears crowned and in the company of the Holy Kin on the south screen by the Lady altar at St. Helen's Ranworth in Norfolk, which celebrates the three Marys and their sons as examples of successful motherhood. Eamon Duffy contends the three Marys with their children were icons of divine blessing on the 'earthliness of womanly things' such as marriage and childbearing. Placing St. Margaret next to them signifies the contradictory supernatural power of the holy virgin, 'the untouched and inviolate female body as the meeting place of earth and heaven, the spousals of human and divine'. See Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes: the Cult of Women Saints in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century England', pp. 175-196. Christine Peters suggests that the iconography of the three Marys was a way in which to provide Christ with kindred, it is more than a sanction of fertility but a 'livelier, and more intimate, version of the Jesse Tree'. See Peters, *Patterns of Piety*, p. 120.

empathy with the process of birth due to her episode with the dragon. Margaret was swallowed by a dragon, which represented succumbing to sin or temptation, but was able to break free due to her faith.[105] Women would pray to Margaret so their baby would be delivered as swiftly as Margaret exited the dragon.[106] Another line of thought on St. Margaret's connection to childbirth comes from her episode with the black demon. When Margaret confronts the demon, she performs an exorcism, which linked her with the exorcist King Solmon who was thought to protect expectant mothers and newborn children from harmful demons.[107] Similarly, in the Sarum Rite, the ritual for the churching of women called upon God to protect 'thy servant with child' as 'thy mighty power didst deliver Jonah from the whale's belly'.[108] Relics were also considered a source of wellbeing and consolation. In Burton-on-Trent, pregnant women would lean against the staff of St. Modwenna, a seventh-century English nun.[109] The Virgin Mary's birthing girdle was reported to have been bestowed on the monks at Westminster Abbey by

[105] Michael E. Heyes, *Margaret's Monsters: Women, Identity, and the Life of St. Margaret in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2019). See 'The monastic Margaret: the Life of St. Anthony and Gregory's Dialogues in the Life', pp. 15-29, for an examination of the dragon as a metaphor for sexual temptation. Also see 'Paging Dr. Margaret: prayers and pregnancy in the Life of St. Margaret', pp. 108-143, for Heye's interpretation on the dragon as a lying-in chamber. This builds upon the scholarship of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Renate Blumenfield-Kosinski, and Jean-Pierre Albert that picture the dragon as mother, labour, and the womb. See Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message: Some Post-Conquest Accounts of Hagiographic Textual Transmission', in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission*, ed. by Minnis, pp. 39-54 (p. 53); Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150*-1300, p. 126; Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Not of Woman Born: Representations of Caesarean Birth in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 10-11; Jean-Pierre Albert, 'La Lègende de Sainte Marguerite: Un Mythe Maïeutique?', *Razo, Cahiers Du Centre d'Etudes Médiévals de l'Université de Nic*e, 8 (1988), 19-31 (p. 25).

[106] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 128; Róisín Donohoe, 'Unbynde her anoone': the Lives of St. Margaret of Antioch and the lying-in space in late medieval England', in *Gender in Medieval Places, Spaces, and Thresholds*, ed. by Victoria Blud, Diane Heath and Einat Klafter (London: University of London Press, 2019), pp. 139-156; Wendy R. Larson, 'Who is the Master of This Narrative? Maternal Patronage of the Cult of St. Margaret', in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle* Ages, ed. by Mary C. Erier and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 94-104; Jenny C. Bledsoe, 'The Cult of St. Margaret of Antioch at Tarrant Crawford: The Saint's Didactic Body and its Resonance for Religious Women', *Journal of Medieval Religious Culture* 39, 2 (2013), 173-206; Margaret Cormack, 'Introduction: Approaches to Childbirth in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 21, 2 (2012), 201-207. John Mirk's Sermon on St. Margaret demonstrates another version of the tale where she confronts the dragon and stands on his neck. See 'John Mirk, Sermon on St. Margaret' in *Middle English Lives of Saints*, ed. by Reams.

[107] Juliana Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon: The Cult of St. Margaret in Medieval England* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 158-173.

[108] *Sarum Missal in English*, ed. by A. H. Pearson (London: Church Press Co, 1868); Ryan McDermott, *Tropologies: Ethics and Invention in England, c. 1350-1600* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016).

[109] Leyser, *Medieval Woman*, p. 128.

Edward the Confessor and was available to loan by royalty and aristocracy. Queen Eleanor reportedly borrowed the Virgin's girdle during the birth of Edmund, who received his name because the antiphon of St. Edmund was chanted at the time of his birth.[110]

These images and practices offered comfort and a powerful message of guardianship. This sense of empowerment and protection from the saints was also seen after birth, as the name Margaret and variations of the saint's name accounted for nineteen per cent of daughter's names in late-medieval Norwich alone.[111] Likewise, there is evidence of a child being christened 'Catherine' in Yorkshire for the love of St. Catherine.[112] Carole Hill argued that 'the patronage of such a powerful namesake, the redeemer of female flesh, was, they believed the most likely to bestow on them a high level of protection in life and death'.[113] In embracing these offerings of comfort and powerful messages of guardianship and shared experience, the belief was that 'Mary had her own share of suffering at the cross, if their own was to be in childbirth, then the saints and Mary will aid them through it'.[114]

The difference between how the lay community celebrated and how hagiography and devotional texts presented childbirth and motherhood demonstrates how religion can redefine the 'natural' or subjective body. Mary Douglas's concept of the 'two bodies' distinguishes between the way human bodies functioned in society and how they were used symbolically.[115] Although human bodies are 'natural symbols' they are also products of the society they inhabit. The social categories and pressures that surround the body dominate its physical experience.[116] As established in Chapters One and Two, religion played a part in influencing the cultural discourse that created the social body. However, personal piety offered an opportunity to

[110] Leyser, *Medieval Woman,* p. 129.
[111] Norman P. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich 1370-1532* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), p. 82.
[112] Leyser, *Medieval Woman,* p. 129.
[113] Hill, 'Here Be Dragons', in *Art, Faith, and Place in East Anglia*, ed. by Heslop, Mellings and Thøfner, p. 109.
[114] Leyser, *Medieval Woman,* p. 124.
[115] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbol: Explorations in Cosmology with a new introduction*, 4th edn. (London: Routledge, 1996).
[116] Douglas, *Natural Symbol,* p. 72.

change the expectations of the 'natural' or subjective body. The cultural discourse of the body could be used to redefine what 'natural' femininity or masculinity entailed. In Chapter One, we saw male saints redefine masculinity in accordance to their spiritual needs using the shared flesh of Christ to unite masculine traits such as courage with feminine qualities such as humility within one body. Chapter Two established how the shared flesh of Mary and Christ exemplified the flesh as a redemptive tool that could unite the enclosed and opened female body to legitimise the active dialogues of virgin martyrs. In the case of mother saints, the Christianisation of marriage helped to align their open bodies with faith and sacrifice.

St. Anne and the Birth of the Virgin

As the Virgin Mary's mother, St. Anne was an important and well-known figure in the middle ages.[117] She was also a complex figure that aptly demonstrated how the Christianisation of marriage and the sanctifying of procreation helped women to articulate their piety. The earliest text that documented St. Anne's life was the apocryphal *Protevangelium of James*, which was written in Greek during the middle of the second century. However, in the fourth and fifth centuries Jerome and Popes Damasus, Innocent I and Gelasius condemned it as untrustworthy and a misinterpretation of the kinship of the holy family.[118] The Holy Kinship consisted of St. Anne's three marriages. Her first marriage to Joachim produced the Virgin Mary. Her second, to Clopas (Joachim's brother), resulted in Mary Clopas whose sons were James the Less,

[117] Pamela Sheingorn, '"The Wise Mother": The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary', *Gesta*, 32, 1 (1993), 69-80; Ton Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne: A Holy Grandmother and Her Children.', in *Sanctity and Motherhood*, ed. by Mulder-Bakker, pp. 31-65; Pamela Sheingorn 'Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History', in *Medieval Families*, ed. by Neel, pp. 273-301.

[118] The main critique was that it explained the brothers of Jesus from Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55-56, James, Joses, Simon and Jude, as Joseph's sons by an earlier marriage, which questioned the belief that Joseph and Mary had been lifelong virgins. St. Jerome and the Western Church preferred the interpretations that James, Joses, Simon and Jude were the sons of Mary's sisters and therefore Jesus's cousins. 'Legends of St. Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary: Introduction', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames.

Simon, Joseph, and Jude. Lastly, in her third marriage to Salome, she gave birth to Mary Salome, the mother of James the Great and John the Apostle.[119]

However, the stigma against Anne's three marriages did not continue to the Latin retellings of the *Protevangelium of James* that circulated under different titles during the middle ages. The most important of these was the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, which survives in over 180 manuscripts.[120] The various recensions of the *Pseudo-Matthew* paved the way for dozens of later hagiographies, sermons and pieces of lyrical prose documenting Anne's life and Mary's birth and childhood in both Latin and the vernacular. Middle English works on St. Anne include John Mirk's vernacular sermons on Mary's conception and St. Anne's feast day.[121] However, neither reading presents Anne as a saint in her own right but an intercessory figure between Mary and God.[122] John Lydgate also wrote two poems on St. Anne and she was included in Osbern Bokenham's fifteenth-century hagiographical compilation *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*.[123] Bokenham wrote the 'Life of St. Anne' for Katherine Clopton Denston, the daughter and sister of wealthy cloth merchants, who had a daughter named after St. Anne. Bokenham's hagiography of St. Anne promoted the message that laypeople could have a good, loving marriage with children without forgoing holiness. In the closing lines, Bokenham invoked St. Anne's assistance in fulfilling Katherine and John Denston's wish for a son.[124] Bokenham's retelling is unlike early narratives of St. Anne, as it focused on Anne's human

[119] Eileen P. McKiernan González, 'Holy Kingship', in *Routledge Revivals: Medieval Germany, an Encyclopaedia*, ed. by John M. Jeep (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 385-387 (p. 386).
[120] J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M. R. James* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 84-99 (p. 84-87).
[121] 'Homily 51: De Solempnitate St. Anne, Matris Marie', *Mirk's Festial,* pp. 213-216; 'Homily 57: De Natiuitate Beate Marie Et Eius Solempnitate', *Mirk's Festial*, pp. 245-249.
[122] Reames, 'Legends of St. Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary: Introduction', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames.
[123] 'Praise of St. Anne' and 'Invocation to Seynt Anne', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by MacCracken, pp. 130-133. For an edited edition see *A legend of holy women: a translation of Osbern Bokenham's 'Legends of Holy Women'*, trans. by Delany. Simon Horobin argues that Anne's life was also likely a part of Osbern Bokenham's translation of *the Legenda Aurea* but is missing from the Abbotsford MS due to lost leaves. See Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the work of Osbern Bokenham', p. 941.
[124] Gibson, 'Saint Anne and the Religion of Childbed: Some East Anglian Texts and Talismans', in *Interpreting Cultural* Symbols, ed. by Ashley and Sheingorn, pp. 95-110 (pp. 104-107).

experience of infertility, the events that led to her giving birth to the Virgin Mary, and her virtuous and pious nature.[125]

In the text, Anne is wed to Joachim of Nazareth of the house of David. Joachim is a rich and dignified man who, like Anne, was simple, rightful, and pious before God.[126] Despite having a faithful and devout relationship, for 'twenty winters they lyved wythout issw, in chaste maryage and not vycyous and thow of here seed no fruht grew'.[127] Chastity in marriage covered a vast area of meaning. Spiritual union was a legally binding marriage in which both partners mutually agreed to abstain from sexual relations for reasons of piety. Celibate marriage denoted a couple's transition to a celibate life. Chaste marriage was used by medieval authorities to indicate a couple remained faithful to their marriage vows, only participating in sexual intercourse together, for procreational purposes.[128] Therefore, the text's reference to matrimonial chastity does not explicitly mean Anne and Joachim practised abstinence; it is more likely that they only had legitimised sex for procreation and practised sexual fidelity.[129] The reference to Joachim and Anne's 'chaste marriage' served to legitimise and validate Anne's position as the Virgin Mary's mother.[130] St. Colette of Corbie (c. 1381-1447) reportedly received a vision of St. Anne after she publicly denounced Anne for marrying three times due to carnal reasons. In St. Colette's vision, St. Anne and saints turned their backs on her because she had scorned the 'mother of holy Mary'. St. Anne defended her marriages, claiming that her holy offspring were the source of her honour and holiness.[131] Anne's 'chaste marriages', where

[125] Reames, 'Legends of St. Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, ed. by Reames.
[126] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 210-243.
[127]'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 259-1.
[128] Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: sexual abstinence in medieval wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 1-5.
[129] Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 5.
[130] Jennifer Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 79; Virginia Nixon, *Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), p. 121-132. For more information on St. Anne's three marriages see the section 'St. Anne and the Birth of the Virgin' of this chapter.
[131] Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 79.

she participated in procreational sex, are framed as in keeping with God's will to produce the holy family and kinship.[132] This theme is continued in Bokenham's text, as Anne and Joachim both prayed to God to send them fruit through his special grace. Anne vowed she would offer her baby to the temple, while Joachim travelled to Jerusalem to make an offering.[133] As Vauchez commented, 'their chastity […] provide[d] the perfect, unblemished source for Mary's purity and chastity'.[134]

However, at the temple, Isakar the bishop rebuked Joachim for being childless, stating 'that bareynesse to God is reprovable, and cursed is yche man and condempnable, as Holy Scripture us both telle, that no fruit forth bryngthe in Israele'.[135] Joachim, ashamed at his inability to fulfil his duty to God and his wife, retreated to the wilderness in solitude for five months.[136] A distraught Anne blamed her failure to conceive for her husband's decision. She cried to the Lord that:

> has grautyd be kindly engenderue to joyen in the likeness of ther nature, and in ther issu, iche afryr his kynde [..] fro the gefte of thy benygnyté [Anne] excludynge; swych is my chauce. Yet if yt Thee had lykede me to avaunce wyth sone or dogter, in humble wyse, I wolde it had offrede to Thy servyse[137]

Anne and Joachim both present anxieties around infertility, believing it to be God rebuking or punishing them. Anne beseeched God to repair her barren womb, while Joachim despaired to the angel that 'the seed is lost which I have sow [..] and whan man be reknyd I am lefth behynde'.[138] The imagery of Anne's prayer and Joachim's escape to the wildness demonstrates how producing offspring is seen as the natural order. The description does not invoke a

[132] Once St. Anne had fulfilled her prophecy of having three daughters, she has no interest in marrying again. See 'Anne, mother of mothers', in Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 67-97.
[133]'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 266-268.
[134] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 107.
[135] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 289-293. It is important to note the Christianisation of this event: as Christianity had yet to be established Isakar would not have been a bishop during this time.
[136] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 307-318.
[137] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne' II. 363-376.
[138] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 413-415, II. 432-434.

supernatural intervention, but that Anne and Joachim have been excluded from the God-giving 'gift' of procreation. The cycle of life becomes Christianised through the sanctification of marriage and childbirth.

Sheila Delany believed there was a theological reason for Bokenham's use of natural imagery. As Joachim and Anne are direct descendants of Christ, the environmental imagery shows how the conception of Mary was natural and legitimate.[139] Due to Joachim and Anne's prayers, an angel visited them separately. Anne is told not to be afraid, for soon 'the fruit of her body shall be held in reverence'.[140] Likewise, the angel informed Joachim:

> I have also seyn thy gret schame
> And the hatful reprof of bareynesse
> To thee objectyd wythowt thy blame,
> God ys wenger of wyckydnesse,
> And when He the wombe of his wel-belovyde, sothly,
> Schettyth, He it opnyth the more mervelusly.
> Sare, the princes of youre kynrede
> Tyl foure score yer sche was baren.
> And thanne she had Isaac, in whoos seede
> The blessynge of folk promyssed was certeyn.
> Bareyn was Rachel, the sothe to sayn,
> Tyl she hade Joseph, of Egipt governour
> And of many folk from hungur the salvatour.
> Who among dukys was myghtyere
> Than was Sampson? Telle thou me.
> Or who amonge juges was holyere
> Than Samuel? Whos modres bothe perde
> Were bareyn. Thy wyf stant in lyke degre;
> For a doughter she shal have, sothlye
> Whos name clepyd shal be Marye.[141]

[139] Delany, *Impolitic Bodies*, p. 82.
[140] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 388.
[141] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 468-488.

This description shows Anne as a passive receptacle, who is not responsible for her 'opened' female body. It is God as an avenger of wickedness, who shuts and opens the closed womb of his beloved. It also implies that God causes and can therefore correct infertility. By describing these factors as within God's remit, the blame shifts away from Anne and the deficient female body.

The divine intervention places St. Anne's womb as a vessel of higher purpose, further amplified by the biblical references to Sarah, Rachel, and Samson's unnamed barren mother. These women had trouble conceiving, but through their prayers and God's intervention, they gave birth to important biblical men.[142] By referencing these biblical women, Bokenham also demonstrates his ambiguous stance on Mary's Immaculate Conception. For although these barren women gave birth through divine intervention, they were not free from Original Sin. Likewise, in John Mirk's homily on the birth of Mary, he wrote, 'for God had ȝeuyn hom fryte of hur bodies by grace more þen by kynd'.[143] The ambiguous line Anne speaks to Joachim at the Golden Gate, 'to conceyvyn, I am able', is fitting to the period's belief of the Immaculate Conception. As previously discussed, there was opposition to the doctrine, but by the fifteenth century, it was generally accepted.[144] The ambiguity of how Anne and Joachim conceived Mary does not align itself with either side of the argument but remains open to interpretation.[145]

Bokneham's language also links Anne to biblical figures through her lineage. Sarah is described as a 'princes of youre kynrede', which suggests she is a noble ancestor of Anne's. The angel confirmed this when they informed Joachim that his wife 'stant in lyke degre'. Anne

[142] Sarah gave birth to Isaac, who was spared from ritual sacrifice by God. Rachel gave birth to Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers but rose to become vizier and saved his people from starvation. Samson was one of the last judges of the ancient Israelites.
[143] 'Homily 57: De Natiuitate Beate Marie Et Eius Solempnitate' in *Mirk's Festial*, p. 245, II. 20-21.
[144] For an overview on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception see Chapter Two, 'The Virgin Mary as Mother, Bride, and Lover'.
[145] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 576; Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies*, p. 85; Beth Kreitzer, *Reforming Mary: Changing Images of the Virgin Mary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 205. For further Middle English versions, which offer different views in which Anne conceives Mary without Joachim, see *The Middle English Stanzaic Versions of the Life of Saint Anne*, ed. by R. E. Parker, EETS, Original Series no. 174 (London: Early English Text Society, 1928).

as an integral part of biblical ancestry alludes to the development of the Holy Kinship, which brought together the belief that Mary retained her virginity after birth and the New Testament's references to the brothers of Christ.[146] The Holy Kinship of Anne's three marriages produced three daughters that made up the *trinubium* – the female alternative of Christ's genealogical tree, which reimagined the Tree of Jesse imagery with St. Anne as its source.[147] Pamela Sheingorn explained that, whereas the Trinity emphasised the divine origins of Christ's soul, the matrilineal trinity accentuated the lineage of Christ's physical body.[148] Christ's flesh and humanity are again described as distinctly female. This theological symmetry between Mary and Christ is continued throughout their lives; ultimately, they both have unusual conceptions. Mary was conceived without Original Sin, and Christ was incarnated in Mary through divine intervention. Mary shared in Christ's suffering at the cross, and in death, they were both received bodily into heaven. Therefore, God opened Anne's womb due to her 'noble pedegre' and importance in creating the biblical line of descent. As St. Paula's and St. Elizabeth's decisions to bear children were explained as their duty in carrying on their noble lineage, the tensions of Anne's female body are eased due to her social, and in this case holy, duty.[149] In a similar narrative structure to the Annunciation, these mother saints' fulfilment of the marital promise and personal sacrifice mirrors the Virgin Mary's sacrifice in willingly becoming the vessel of the son of God.

[146] Sheingorn explains that through uniting the language of the New Testament with Marian doctrine, the Holy Kingship created familial relationships with Christ and various named people from the New Testament and Apocryphal gospels. 'It united the available persons into one lineage'. See Sheingorn, 'Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History', in *Medieval Families*, ed. by Neel, pp. 273-301 (p. 273).
[147] The Carmelites, formally known as the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, supported the inclusion of St. Anne's mother, Esmerentina, to the Holy Kinship which allowed for the inclusion of Elizabeth, John the Baptist, and Saint Servatius. In the fourteenth century the Holy Kinship was entwined with the imagery of the *Hortus Conclusus*. This developed into iconography of St. Anne inside the walled garden with her daughters and children, whilst her husbands looked over the wall or were excluded. See González, 'Holy Kingship', in *Routledge Revivals: Medieval Germany, an Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Jeep, p. 386.
[148] Sheingorn, 'Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History', p. 280.
[149] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 210. For a further example of a saint who lived in a spiritual marriage see the discussion of St. Cecilia in Chapter Two of this thesis.

The Redemptive Flesh

Mary's sorrows and sacrifices were a key trend in late medieval devotion. The first sacrifice Mary made was during the Annunciation when she agreed to become the vessel to the Word of God. In *De Carne Christi* (The Flesh of Christ), Tertullian (c. 155-240AD) explained how the virginal body of Mary created the flesh of Christ. His description of the Annunciation demonstrated Mary's dual relationship with Eve:

> It was while Eve was yet a virgin, that the ensnaring word had crept into her ear which was to build the edifice of death. Into a virgin's soul, in like manner, must be introduced that Word of God which was to raise the fabric of life; so that what had been reduced to ruin by this sex, might be the self-same sex to be recovered to salvation. As Eve believe the serpent, so Mary believed the angel.[150]

The passage shows how Eve and Mary paralleled each other during the Fall and the Annunciation. They were both virgins when the devil greeted Eve in serpent form, and the angel Gabriel greeted Mary; whereas Eve's disobedience resulted in the punishment of a painful childbirth, Mary's obedience led to the salvation of humanity. The Annunciation needed to happen before the Incarnation of Christ, for three reasons. The main reason was 'that the ordre of the repceracion ansuere to the ordre of preuaricacion'.[151] As Mary's obedience imitated and redeemed Eve's transgression, from the second century, Mary was regarded as a 'Second Eve'.[152] The palindrome 'Eve-Ava' demonstrated how Mary reversed Eve's sin:[153] Mary 'turnst abakward Eve's nome'.[154]

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[150] 'Tertullian, On the Flesh of Christ', in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Roberts, Donaldson and Coxe, trans. by Holmes. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: Tertullian, 'On the Flesh of Christ', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0315.htm> [accessed 02 April 2020] (chap. 17).
[151] 'Annunciacion of oure lord', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 227-236 (p. 227, II. 5-6). This is also in the original *Legenda Aurea.* See, 'The Annunciation of Our Lord', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 196-202 (p. 196).
[152] See Chapter Two, 'Devotion to the Shared Flesh'. Theologians such as Irenaeus, Tertullian and origin all emphasized Mary's role as a second Eve. Also see Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 40.
[153] Rebecca Garber, *Feminine Figuara: Representations of Gender in Religious Texts by Medieval German Women Writers 1100-1375* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 34.
[154] 'Heyl, levedy, se-stoerre bryht', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. by Saupe, 9:8.

The exaltation of Mary's redemption of Eve's transgression highlights the social and religious battle around 'opened' and 'enclosed' female bodies. While Eve opened her enclosed virginal body to temptation, Mary's body remained sealed. The Virgin Mary's womb is described as the *hortus conclusus* [the enclosed garden] for her body retained its virginal purity after childbirth and was not contaminated by the male seed. Donna Spivey Ellington argued:

> The closed nature of Mary's body was an excellent symbol of sinlessness and purity in general, because it suggested no holes or openings to let in sin, uncleanness, or the danger of evil. [...] Mary's sealed body endowed her with the additional distinction of embodying all of the spiritual advice traditionally given to women in medieval culture who sought to be especially holy. Western patriarchal culture tended to view the female body as dangerous, for its openings were perceived to be subject to outside forces and influences. It was in danger of lacking clearly defined boundaries. Male spiritual writers therefore pictured the ideal female body as closed, intact, not subject to breaches from without.[155]

Mary's body as the perfect model of spiritual femininity was due to her virginity and her body as a clearly defined boundary, remaining intact and closed.[156] However, in the prevalent motif of Mary and Eve as opposites in late medieval devotional material, Mary is not only exalted as enclosed. Mary is 'thee gate of heven' and the 'mayden ever vurst and late of heaveneriche sely gate'.[157] Mary as the blessed gate of heaven or the *porta paradisi* signified how Eve's actions closed the door to God and Mary's deeds opened it.[158] As discussed in Chapter Two, Mary is paradoxically associated with being both open and closed: she is both the opened door

[155] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 69.
[156] In the exegesis of Luke 1:26-38, 'Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary', Mary agrees to become the vessel of God's Word only with the reassurance that her virginity remains intact.
[157] 'The angel to the vergyn said', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. by Saupe, 4:9; 'Heyl, levedy, se-stoerre bryht', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, 9:4.
[158] The motif is a common liturgical image stemming from Ezekiel 44:1-4 in which God shows Ezekiel a closed gate and explains: "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut for the prince. The prince himself shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord: he shall enter in by the way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the same way." Medieval commentators interpret this as a prefiguring of the Immaculate Conception and virgin birth: only the Holy Spirit would have access to Mary's womb. See Lyn F. Jacobs, *Opening Doors: The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), p. 5.

to heaven and the *porta clausa* [enclosed gate] due to her position as the mother of God and a perpetual virgin. However, it is due to this illogical description of Mary that she can act as the redeemer for all estates of womanhood. The 'Annunciation' explained why God picked a married virgin to bear Christ: 'by that the reprofe shulde be take awaye of [alle] estates of women, that is to wete of virgines, of wyues and of wedues, for this same Virgine was in that trebel estate'.[159] Mary not only redeemed Eve's transgressions but also broke down the hierarchal condition of womankind by uniting all the estates in one body. Like Christ, Mary's multiplicity helped women created a conductive discourse around the female body and piety.

Rebecca Garber examined how Hildegard of Bingen (c. 1098-1179) built upon the oppositional motif of Eve and Mary in her writings 'towards a recuperation of Eve through Mary. By offering Eve redemption through Mary, Hildegard offer[ed] a means to redeem the female body.'[160] In Hildegard's *Scivias* (c. 1151-1152) Eve is represented as a white cloud shaped like a wing. The symbolic characterization of Eve represents her prelapsarian state as sinless and separated from the flesh. The white colour represents Eve's virginal state, mirroring that of the Virgin Mary.[161] Likewise, green in the manuscript's illuminations of the cloud-Eve represented paradise before the Fall, fertility, and Eve's role as the first mother of humankind.[162] Garber argued that the colour of the cloud-Eve invoked connotations with innocence, divinity, and physical procreation without lust.[163] The cloud-Eve is only stained when the serpent breaths a black poison onto her.[164] Garber's identification of this substance as semen refers back to Peter of Lombard's description of the Fall bringing carnality to sexual union. Hildegard's description of Eve rejects the narrative of the female body as innately

[159] 'Annunciacion of oure lord', *Gilte Legende,* p. 228, II. 42-45. This is also in the original *Legenda Aurea.* See, 'The Annunciation of Our Lord', *The Golden Legend,* p. 197.
[160] Garber, *Feminine Figuara,* p. 33.
[161] Garber, *Feminine Figuara,* pp. 37-42.
[162] Garber, *Feminine Figuara,* p. 42; Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, p. 102; Peter Dronke, 'Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Western Colour-Imagery', *Eranos Jahrbuch,* 41 (1972), 57-107 (pp. 82, 94).
[163] Garber, *Feminine Figuara,* p. 43.
[164] Garber, *Feminine Figuara,* p. 46.

carnal. Before the Fall, Eve is pictured like Mary, who is illuminated as a white and green flower.

In her lyrics, Hildegard used the subject 'woman' *femina* to refer to both Mary and Eve. The 'feminine form into which a king entered' (*femineam formam rex introivit*), Mary, redeemed the 'woman who built death' *(femina mortem instruxit*), Eve. By using the subject 'woman', Hildegard placed the role of salvation and redemption beyond the virginal body of Mary but in the all-encompassing figure of the 'form of a woman' (*in feminea forma*).[165] Through Mary all women are granted redemption. Hildegard does not refer to women as daughters of Eve but as *fillae Mariae:* daughters of Mary.[166] The hierarchal understanding of woman aligned virgins with Mary, and married and widowed mothers with Eve.[167] In Hildegard's reading of Mary absolving Eve and womanhood of their transgression, mothers were offered a chance of redemption. Despite following an inferior path than virgins, Mary's liberating deeds represented the restoration of women's prelapsarian state. This state, as seen in Hildegard's vision of Mary and Eve before the Fall, envisioned a type of motherhood that was not defined by carnality, lust, or sin.

As Eve's naked body represented the carnality and corruption to the flesh that occurred after the Fall, Mary's clothed female body represented the redemptive possibility of the flesh. The sinless flesh that Christ took from Mary remade him as the second Adam, mirroring Mary's role as the second Eve.[168] Their shared flesh acted as a new genre of discourse upon the body with the power to deconstruct cultural readings that deemed the body transgressive.[169] Mary's body demonstrated this dismantling by uniting and praising the enclosed and porous nature of

[165] Garber, *Feminine Figuara*, p. 51.
[166] Garber, *Feminine Figuara*, p. 51.
[167] Garber, *Feminine Figuara*, p. 56.
[168] Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), p. 19; Robert Myles, *Chaucerian Realism* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), p. 85.
[169] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, p. 231.

woman within one body. Her enclosed womb and her milk, which was considered the 'medesyne of all our sin', were equally honoured.[170] Likewise, Mary's position as the mother of God elevated the divine and salvific potential of womanhood. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1034-1109) compared Mary's divine motherhood to God's fatherhood. He stated, 'God is the Father of all created things, and Mary is the Mother of all re-created things'.[171] In the late fifteenth-century poem *Ros Mary: Ane Ballat of Our Lady'*, Mary was envisioned as the 'temple of the Trinity': a powerful metaphor for the merits of her act of childbirth.[172] Mary was not merely a passive mournful mother, but a priest offering Christ as a sacrificial victim to God.[173] Caroline Walker Bynum argued that preachers and mystics took advantage of complex religious symbols, like the Virgin, to express their truths.[174] On the other side of this, these acts of gender reversal and shared experience also heighten the status of Mary and demonstrate her importance as a multifaceted and complex symbol that legitimized a spectrum of marginal identities. Mary's intercessory activities aided in legitimizing the female voice – from earthly queens mediating with kings to mothers negotiating with their sons.[175]

The shared flesh as a redemptive tool offered women a new discourse, as opposed to the dominant biological theories, in which to understand their bodies. Through the figure of Mary, women not only saw their experiences of motherhood used to articulate piety but also the salvific potential of the female body. Virginity was not forever lost, but a redeemable state. The desire to return to the 'original' estate of womanhood is seen in the lives of these mother

[170] 'The angel to the vergyn said', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. by Saupe, 4:10.
[171] *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, trans. by Benedicta Ward (New York: Penguin Viking, 1986) p. 121; Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, pp. 126, 213; *Mary, Mother of God*, ed. by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerman, 2004).
[172] This poem was attributed to William Dunbar but is no longer considered to be his work. 'Ros Mary, most of vertewe virginall', in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, 89:19.
[173] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 81-88.
[174] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy* Fast, pp. 266, 278, 285; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110-169.
[175] Fitch, 'Mothers and their Sons: Mary and Jesus in Scotland, 1450-1560', p. 166; Leyser, *From Maternal Kin*, p. 40.

saints. After fulfilling their social duties of marriage and childbearing, St. Birgitta, St. Paula, and St. Elizabeth vowed to retain their chastity after their husbands' deaths.

Recoding the Womb of the Mother Saint

Before her marriage, St. Elizabeth pledged to God and her confessor, Conrad, 'that yef she might ouerlyue her husbonde that she wolde kepe perpetual continence'.[176] As seen previously in the spiritual guides aimed at women, such as the *Ancrene Wisse*, the female is described as a leaky vessel that required suppression, preservation, and control with abstinence as the key to enclosing the open female body. In an attempt to regain agency over her body after her husband's death, Elizabeth threatened to hurt herself: '[she] shall cutte off [her] owne nose and make [herself] so defourmed that eueri man shall haue abhominacion of her]'.[177] St. Elizabeth's threat of self-inflicted violence demonstrates her struggle against the social body (of motherhood) imposed upon her and her subjectivity or natural body (her virginity) that she is trying to retain, representing the dynamic relationship between the body/flesh and the spirit.[178] Whereas the 'natural' body (spirit) holds the subjective desires of an individual, in this instance St. Elizabeth's wish to remain a virgin, the social body (body/flesh) develops and remains dominant through the 'conversion of gestures'.[179] These gestures are a social form of embodied meaning, such as these mother saints' fulfilment of their marital debts . After this debt is fulfilled, Elizabeth can devote herself entirely to Christ and regain her chastity, or her 'natural

[176] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende,* p. 844, II. 61-62.
[177] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende,* p. 849, II. 247-251.
[178] Martha J. Reineke, *Sacrificed Lives, Kristeva on Women and Violence* (Indiana: Indiana Press University, 1997), p. 113; Jane Tibbetts Schulenberg, 'The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation', in *Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,* ed. by Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp. 29-72. This trope is also seen in other saints' lives. When St. Wilgefortis found out she had been promised in marriage by her father she prayed to God to become repulsive; the next morning she had sprouted a beard which caused the engagement to be called off and her eventual martyrdom. St. Paula also threatened to cut off her nose to spite her face, like St. Frideswithe and St. Ebba, who followed through to prevent being raped by the Vikings.
[179] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 14.

body', which she had to give up for social duty. Her piety allows her to recode the natural function of her social body.

St. Paula also made a similar pledge of chastity. After her husband's death, she lived in a community of virgins. Despite being the humblest in dress, speech, and actions, Paula believed she was unworthy to preach to the other women as she occupied a lower estate of womanhood: 'yef I wolde preche in the same chastite among so many vertues it shulde be outrage'.[180] Although she had retained her chastity since her husband's death and only fulfilled her maternal role due to the obligations of marriage, Paula does not want to be a hypocrite by preaching the sanctity of virginity to the fellowship. Paula explained how she felt about her previous duty in her statement, 'I haue pleased man and the world I desire now to please Ihesu Crist'.[181] These words demonstrate how St. Paula had to fulfil her social duty before her desire to serve Christ and places her sanctity in the control of her male counterparts.

The theme of control is also apparent in the 'Life of St. Elizabeth' through her relationships with men. The text reads:

> Bi the consent of her husband she putte her in the obedience of Maister Conrat, a pore man and litell of degre, bt he was of noble science and of perfit religion, so that she dede with ioy and reuerence whateuer he commanded her for to haue the merite of obedience and of God that was obedient unto the dethe.[182]

St. Elizabeth's confessor Conrad controlled a large part of her religious life even after her husband's death. He repeatedly punished her for her transgressions. In one instance, she did not attend mass due to a visit from the Marquis of Losenge. As a result, she was stripped and beaten alongside other guilty women.[183] Because Elizabeth visited a cloister without Conrad's permission, Conrad beat her so severely that there were still marks on her body three weeks

[180] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 137, 110-111.
[181] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 137, II. 108-109.
[182] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 845, II. 92-96.
[183] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 845, II. 97-102.

later.[184] The abuse St. Elizabeth endured on her body demonstrates how her religious and lay life were at odds with each other, further showing the conflict between the flesh and spirit.

Both St. Paula and St. Elizabeth had their holy and fertile bodies passed down through their fathers, husbands, confessors, and eventually Christ.[185] Bernau commented that the implication of their bodies passing down a hierarchical chain of men is that while female saints cannot escape secular masculine authority, they are still subordinate to masculine religious authority. They are transformed from obedient wives to obedient spouses of Christ, the supreme patriarch.[186] I would contend that piety is not used to transition from wife to spouse, but to remodel their bodily worth to return to their previous state before their social obligation. Their flesh represents the possibility for redemption and alignment with the spirit, for faith and Christ are always something than 'lives' within the body.[187]

To return to Mary Douglas's point about the two opposing bodies, religion offered the opportunity to readjust the cultural discourse and allow women to express themselves outside the social constraints of their body.[188] However, it is important to note that religion did not offer an erasure of femininity or the past self. As Sandy Stone argued, dominant cultural narratives erased the transgender individual, and it is within that history we can find that oppositional discourse.[189] Likewise, as central biological and theological understandings of the female body erased and diminished women's potential, it is in the devotional discourse of

[184] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 848, II. 195-197.
[185] In 'Women on the Market' Luce Irigaray argues that, 'in history, women have value only as they serve as the possibility of, and potentially benefit in, relations amongst men [..] the product of women, signs and commodities is always referred back to men [..] and they always pass from one man to another, from one group of men to another.' See Luce Irigaray, 'Women on the Market', in *The Sex is Not one*, trans. by Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 170-191. In this reading the mother saints' body becomes a product of male exchange in order to deem their worth. See the section on 'Motherhood as Martyrdom' for further analysis on how St. Paula removes her daughter from this cultural exchange.
[186] Bernau, 'Gender and Sexuality', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 110-111.
[187] Romans 8:11: And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. The quotation offers reassurance to a Christian audience that faith offers a pathway to reunite the spirit and the body: 'the assurance is that the indwelling Spirit is the beginning of a process [towards God/Heaven] and guarantee of its completion'. See James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary. Romans 1-8* (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), pp. 432, 445-446.
[188] Douglas, *Natural Symbol*, p. 72.
[189] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, pp. 229-31.

woman we can find contrasting understandings of the female body. In book two of the *Revelations,* Birgitta asked Christ why he had chosen a simple widow like herself. In Christ's reply, he compared Birgitta to a phoenix rising from the ashes, 'thoroughly burned by them and purged from sins, you will arise like the rejuvenated bird, having put off the skin of sensuality.'[190] Allegorically, the phoenix represented the death and resurrection of Christ and the preparation the faithful endured for the renewal of their former state after death.[191] The image of the phoenix does not suggest reversal or erasure, but a renewal of the self's original state, where the flesh has not been deemed transgressive but is freely united with the spirit. Through the redemptive motif represented through the shared flesh, these mother saints use their piety to recode the cultural significance of their wombs, just as Mary redeemed Eve's transgressions.

Biological theories of the uterus during the late middle ages simultaneously projected it as an aggressive, siren-like void and a placid vessel waiting to be filled.[192] As Chapter Two discussed, the Platonic reading of the womb as an 'animal within an animal' led to women's association with sickness and carnality.[193] However, the womb also highlights the paradoxical representation of women.[194] Hippocratic theory developed the concept of the 'wandering womb', which expanded on Plato's idea of the womb as an uninhibited animal that adhered only to it base appetite by arguing that if deprived of sexual intercourse and impregnation, the

[190] *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume I: Liber Caelestis*, Books I-III, trans. by Denis Searby, ed. by Bridget Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 222.
[191] David Badke, 'Phoenix', *The Medieval Bestiary* (2011) <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast149.htm> [accessed 30 July 2020].
[192] Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death, and Art in the Middle Ages* (London: Profile Books in association with the Welcome Collection, 2018), p. 251.
[193] Plato's *Timaeus* describes the womb as a disobedient animal whose only desire is procreation. When this need is unfulfilled, the womb grows discontented and wanders around the body, obstructing respiration and causing a variety of diseases. See Chapter Two 'The Female Body as Opened and Enclosed', and fn. 44.
[194] Despite virginity being exalted, virgins were considered at high risk from disease since sex and pregnancy were believed to be the best way to ensure a healthy and stable womb. See Ursula Potter, *The Unruly Womb in Early Modern English Drama: plotting women's biology on the stag*e (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), p. 17.

uterus would dislodge, wandering around the body and creating disease.[195] Hippocrates's (c. 460-375BC) treatise *On Generation* also placed birth defects solely as the fault of the womb: infants with disabilities were explained due to a deficiency in the womb (or an injury sustained by the womb); weak children were due to the womb's inability to nourish the foetus correctly, and repeated births of sickly children were considered to be the fault of an undersized womb that restricted foetal growth.[196] The ideology of a 'wandering womb' with a will of its own based purely on the desires of the flesh worked well with the Christian doctrine of Original Sin – this is an important point in the exaltation of St. Anne's womb from a lineage standpoint.[197]

The opening stanza of St. Anne's hagiography focuses on the etymology of her name, which denotes grace, which she was worthy to obtain for her womb was the source of the blessed and holy virgin.[198] The text reads:

> This gracious Anne was stoke and rote.
> The whiche is commendyde, as I do rede,
> Of thynges thre most syngulerly:
> Ferst of hyr nobyl and royal kynrede,
> Conveyede from David down lyneally.[199]

The lexical pattern of nature, such as trunk and root, envisions the Jesse Tree: Christ's genealogical tree that has Jesse, the father of David, at the base. The organic imagery also emphasises that this is the natural role of Anne, not only due to her lineage but her body. She is the source of subsistence for the growth of this branch of the tree – the matrilineal root. The stanza notes that Anne's royal and noble lineage was as a direct descendant of David, the second king of Israel and Judah. St. Jerome stated that it was Christ's Davidic genealogy and

[195] Potter, *The Unruly Womb in Early Modern English Drama*, p. 20.
[196] Irina Metzler, *Disability in medieval Europe: thinking about physical impairment during the high Middle Ages c. 1100 – c. 1400* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 80.
[197] Metzler, *Disability in medieval Europe*, p. 80.
[198] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 97-109.
[199] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 110-114.

the sinless flesh he received from Mary that enabled him to atone for humanity's Original Sin. Christ's Davidic line linked him to Tamar, Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba, who were all associated with sexual transgressions but also delivered the Children of Israel from adversity.[200]

Bokenham addressed the problem in tracing female genealogy, stating 'the custom of Scripture not usyth, lo, of Wymmen to wryte the geneologye; wherefore, as the lyne of Marye Is knowne be Joseph and non othyr wyse'.[201] These lines discuss the traditional narrative of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (c. 80-100AD) that supported the belief that Jesus was a descendent of the house of David, established through his lineage to Joseph.[202] The requirement for Mary to be recognized as an integral part of Christ's royal origins, as it was her flesh that Jesus descended from, led apologists to re-conceptualize the meaning of the Gospel of Matthew, which resulted in a revision of the Protoevangelium of James: *The Pseudo-Matthew* (601AD-700AD).[203] In the life, Bokenham referred to Matthew's writing for authenticity, which suggests that the *Pseudo-Matthew* was one of his sources for this hagiography.[204] A clear line of descent from David, Salomon, Levi, Jacob and Joseph to Anne reinterpreted the polluted female bloodline of Eve as an established line of royal male descent worthy of Christ. As 'blyssud Anne of the blode royal', her womb is praised as worthy to house the 'perles Prencesse, of virginyte'.[205] As a passive space that required 'opening' by God, Anne's womb is exalted throughout the hagiography as a space in which a graceful deed took place:

> And of Annes wombe sprange the oyle-tunne
> Of gracious helthe to alle that beth seke
> […] outh of whom dede spryne
> She that of grace most marvelously

[200] Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 30-31; Bokenham, 'Life of St. Anne', II. 12.
[201] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 126-130
[202] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 21-41 (p. 25).
[203] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', p. 41.
[204] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 148.
[205] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 216, 81.

And of lyf eterne the welle dede forth brynge.[206]

The noun 'oyle' denotes a liquid substance and also salvation through Christ. The noun 'tunne' translates to a large barrel or vessel, typically used to store liquid. Therefore, Anne's womb has created the 'oil of salvation' – the vessel of the saviour. The lexicon of water is apparent with the repetition of the verb 'sprynge' and the noun 'welle', which indicates an erupting natural water source. The language also alludes to Christ's wounds as a cleansing fountain, a place of refuge, and a spiritual remedy.[207] Anne's womb becomes the foundational 'well' of their shared blood and flesh. Delaney has commented that, 'the birth that Bokenham wants to validate is the one into faith'.[208] Through Anne's obedience and piety, her womb is repurposed in the same manner as Mary's. Mary's enclosed womb as an open door to the world symbolically referred to her position as mediator between God and man and the redemptive function of the flesh. Anne's womb as the 'foundational well' of Mary and Christ's shared flesh likewise repurposes the hostile, polluted, and leaky female womb into a divine space for salvation.

The lexicon of motherhood acts as a language of reformation in Christendom: the natural function of the female flesh is reconstructed. To demonstrate this, I will refer to one of the most well-known mother saints St. Birgitta of Sweden, whose matriarchal, Marian-centred vision for her new order was built around the language of mothering.[209] In 1346, two years after the death of her husband, St. Birgitta travelled to Lake Vättern in Stockholm. At the lake, Birgitta received divine instruction from Christ to establish a monastery on the site, which was recorded as the *Regula Salvatoris* (Rule of the Holy Saviour).[210] The *Revelations* clearly

[206] 'Osbern Bokenham, Life of St. Anne', II. 591-688.
[207] Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, p. 225.
[208] Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies*, p. 82.
[209] Samuel Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos: Birgitta of Sweden and Fulfilment of Salvation History', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 251-281 (p. 261).
[210] It was reported that Birgitta received the visions described in the *Regula Salvatoris* (Rule of the Holy Saviour) and had Prior Petrus of Alvastra write them down within a matter of days. It is more likely that this was a carefully

showed Birgitta's 'unconscious commentary' that contemporary monasticism needed reformation.[211] In the *Regula Salvatoris* (Rule of the Holy Saviour) prologue, Christ used the imagery of the vineyard to describe Birgitta and her new order.[212] Christ referred to himself as a mighty king who planted vineyards that produced excellent wine for many years, but now his enemy had sowed a bad seed that had spread throughout his crop.[213] Christ wanted to plant a new vineyard, in which Birgitta is the vine he will fertilise and guard for new vine branches to grow.[214] The vineyard is a metaphor in biblical language that related to the strength of community in faith.[215] The motherhouse, Vadestena's Abbey, acted as the foundational ground of Birgitta's message of re-Christianization and reform that spread through the generations of daughter houses and reconciled the people with God.[216]

The establishment of a new order was a controversial and unique achievement for a woman, as public preaching and engagement in ecclesiastical reform would have been subjected to harsh criticism and slander.[217] St. Birgitta's confessors attempted to counteract this by emphasizing her Marian self-identity.[218] The Virgin Mary was a significant element of St. Birgitta's piety. Moments of the Virgin's life are revisited in St. Birgitta's *Revelations* and

considered outline of the new order by Birgitta and her circle. Searby, 'The Rule of the Saviour: Introduction', in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume IIII*, pp. 110-111.

[211] Denis Searby, 'The Rule of the Saviour: Introduction', in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume IIII*, p. 111; Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 262, 270; Roger Ellis, 'A Note on the Spirituality of Bridget of Sweden', in *Spiritualität heute und gestern*, Internationaler Kongress vom 4 bis 7 August 1972, ed. by James Hogg, Analecta Cartusiana 35, 3 vols (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982-83), pp. 157–167 (pp. 166-7).

[212] Searby, 'The Rule of the Saviour', pp. 124-126.

[213] Searby, 'The Rule of the Saviour', p. 125.

[214] Searby, 'The Rule of the Saviour', p. 125.

[215] Kienzle, 'Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars', in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Muessig, pp. 163-182 (p. 163).

[216] Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', p. 270.

[217] Waters, 'Dangerous Beauty, Beautiful Speech: Gendered Eloquence in Medieval Preaching', pp. 51-63; Georges Duby, 'Introduction: Private Power, Public Power', trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, in *A History of Private Life, Vol. 2, Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. by Phillippe Ariés and Georges Duby (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1988), pp. 3-31; Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). Also see in this thesis, Chapter Two, 'The Virgin Martyr and the Holy Ghost' and 'The Virgin Martyr as Preacher'.

[218] Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', pp. 262-63.

Birgitta engaged in dialogue with the Virgin Mary in over 150 visions.[219] Their shared experience of childbirth and bereavement is particularly important. When St. Birgitta was going through a difficult labour, Mary appeared to her and eased her pain. When St. Birgitta lost her son, Charles, Mary protected him during his passage from life to death. Likewise, Mary permitted St. Birgitta to receive a vision of the Crucifixion to share in her suffering at her son's death.[220] Their shared experience of birth becomes critical to St. Birgitta's status and the transmission of her order. When Birgitta described the joy in her heart, the Virgin spoke to her:

> Daughter, you are marvelling at the movement you feel in your heart. Be assured that it is no illusion but shows a similarity to my own delight and to the mercy done to me. Just as you do not know how this feeling of exultation came so suddenly to your heart, so too my Son's coming to me was wonderful and swift. As soon as I gave my consent to the angel who announced to me the conception of God's Son, I immediately felt something wonderful and alive in me. When he was born from me, he came forth from my untouched virginal womb with an indescribable feeling of exultation and a wonderful swiftness. Therefore, my daughter, do not fear that it is an illusion. Instead be thankful that this movement that you feel is a sign of the coming of my Son into your heart.[221]

The comparison of the joy Birgitta feels to the sensation of Christ growing inside the Virgin's womb after she accepted Gabriel's message legitimizes Birgitta's task of creating a new order as an act of divine will. Birgitta's spiritual pregnancy offers a two-fold union, with the Virgin

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[219] Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, p. 263. Kari Elisabeth Børrensen, 'Religious Feminism in the Middle Ages: Birgitta of Sweden', in *Maistresse of my Wit: Medieval Women, Modern Scholars*, ed. by Louise D'Arcens and Juanita Feros Ruys (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2004), pp. 295-312.

[220] 'Book VII: Chapter 13 The Struggle for Karl Ulfsson's Soul', in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume III*, pp. 228-233. The Virgin Mary acts as Birgitta's midwife. Lines 1-2 read: The Virgin Mary speaks to Lady Birgitta, saying: "I will tell you what I did for the soul of your son Karl as it left his body. I acted like a woman helping another woman as she gives birth, helping the baby so that it does not die from the flow of blood and so that it is not suffocated in that narrow space through which it comes out, making sure that the baby's enemies, who are in the same house, cannot kill it". Chapter 15 ('A Vision of the Crucifixion'), pp. 234-239, recounts Birgitta's vision of the Passion of Christ she received in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the chapel of Mount Clavary, Jerusalem, on the Friday after the after the Ascension of the Lord. Also see Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', p. 263; Katherine Zieman, 'Voices in Dialogue: Reading women in the Middle Ages', in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Olson and Kerby-Fulton, 319-27.

[221] 'Book VI: Chapter 88 Birgitta Feels a Physical Stirring of her Heart', in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume III*, p. 156.

Mary and Christ. As Birgitta was the vine of her new order, the Virgin Mary was the winepress that transformed the Word into flesh. The Swabian retable of the Host Mill (c. 1440) demonstrated this theological motif, which illustrated the production of the shared flesh. Mary is pictured pouring grain into a grinder, which is transformed into the baby Jesus, who is depicted as the Host received at Mass.[222] Like the Virgin Mary, through Birgitta's mystic pregnancy, a new order is born. Birgitta becomes a type of God-bearer herself.[223] Samuel Fanous argued that, 'as Mary gave birth to the Word, Birgitta becomes the *Theotokos*, re-birthing the Logos through her revelations, begetting spiritual children through her personal witness, and bringing forth Vadstena and the order'.[224] Through the establishment of a new order, Birgitta herself becomes a universal mother, and it is through the language of Marian-piety that it becomes legitimized and accepted in the public domain.

The language of motherhood appears throughout the hagiographies of mother saints to legitimise or articulate female saints' religious experiences. St. Paula left her family to travel to Palestine on a pilgrimage to visit the cross of Christ's crucifixion and the tomb where Christ rose. The *Gilte Legende vita* of St. Paula tells how, upon entering the tomb,

> She kessed the stone that the aungell hadde take awat from the monument and beclipp[ed] the places wher the holi body hadde layn and drowe into her mothe the desired waters of beleue that she coueited. And alle Ierusalem is witnesse of the teres and wepingges shedde of her eyen and oure Lord hymselff that she praied to.[225]

St. Paula's sensory and emotive meditation towards Christ, which involved crying, kissing, and embracing the places where his body once laid, is a form of affective piety. The humanity and

[222] Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 94, figure 3.1: *The Host Mill*, c. 1470, Swabian Retable, Museum Ulm, Germany.
[223] Claire L. Sahlin, 'A Marvellous and Great Exultation of the Heart': Mystical Pregnancy and Marian Devotion in Birgitta of Sweden's Revelations', in *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigitine Order*, ed. by James Hogg (Salsburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1993), pp. 108-128 (p. 11).
[224] Fanous, 'Becoming the Theotokos', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, p. 264.
[225] 'St. Paula' *Gilte Legende*, p. 136, 64-69.

suffering of Christ were the central focus of affective piety, which was typically associated with women due to the intrinsic link between Christ's humanity and women's flesh. The inferiority of the female body led to the dichotomies of male/culture and female/nature, thus obstructing women's association with the godhead. However, the bleeding, lactating, and suffering body of Christ, granted access to women to understand the body of the divine through their bodily functions and experiences.[226] The excessively emotive and watery imagery of St. Paula's experience echoes the same sentiments seen in the reinterpretation of St. Anne's womb as a place of salvation. She is implementing her watery and female nature and reimagining it in Christ; her shared suffering acts as a cultural restoration where she defines her nature through piety, uniting her flesh and spirit.[227] As Louise Bishop observed, 'affective piety used women's identity with the flesh to energize not only devotion but social approbation'.[228] The correlation between St. Paula's female experience and her religiosity as a legitimizing process is further underlined in the vision she received upon entering Christ's birthplace:

> She seigh with the eyen of her beleue the childe wrapped in clothes and weping in the crèche, and [..] the sterre shyning vpon the Virgine and moder. [..] She seigh Herodes in his wodenesse sleyng children, Mari and Ioseph fleing into Egipte, and speke with ioie medeled with teres and saide: God saue the, Bethele, hous of pes, in the wiche is born the brede that descended from heuene, God saue the, Eff[r]ata, contrey plentevous, [of] the whiche plente Dauid speke in this wise: 'Verrely we shull entre withinne the tabernacles of hym and worship the place where the fete of hym stode;' and I, right wreched sinner, am iuged worthi to kesse the [cre]che in whiche oure Lorde cried full litell, and in the pitte in whiche the Virgine bare God.[229]

[226] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 282; Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe*, p. 98.
[227] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, p. 184; Cynthia Kosso, Anne Scott, *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 12-13.
[228] Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, & Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), p. 174. For an in-depth analysis and discussion of this topic see Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
[229] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 136-137, II. 78-88.

St. Paula's vision includes Mary's birth and struggles with Christ as a child, an experience she would have related to due to conceiving and losing children of her own. Her words centre around the shared lineage and flesh of both Christ and Mary. The bread that descended from heaven refers to the Eucharist practice of eating bread as a symbol of the body of Christ, the same shared flesh he received from Mary from her Davidic roots.[230] St. Paula recalls David's affliction from Psalm 132:7, which associated the Lord's flesh with habitation and worship. The biblical passage was interpreted as validating the Assumption of Mary and often read during the feast day of the Assumption.[231] The noun 'tabernacle' translates to a dwelling place or temple, thus alluding to the correlation in medieval Christianity of the church with the sacramental body of Christ.[232] Mary's flesh is also compared to clothing in late medieval sermons.[233] As the holy vessel that adjoined human nature and the divine, she is the tabernacle, temple, and dining chamber of God.[234] Like St. Birgitta, St. Paula's hagiography borrows the imagery and experiences of childbirth to demonstrate the saint's reconnection of her social and subjective body through her faith and connection with Mary and Christ. Similarly, Margery Kempe (c. 1373-1438) also experienced vivid visions of being present at the birth and crucifixion of Christ, going on to become the Virgin Mary's handmaiden during the Passion.[235] These mother saints' words and actions illustrate their affective piety as an act of *imitatio Mariae*; their piety is envisioned through their shared motherhood and suffering of the Virgin Mary.

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[230] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 33.
[231] Matthew Levering, *Mary's Bodily Assumption* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015); Tim Perry, Daniel Kendall, *The Blessed Virgin Mary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman, 2013), p. 60; Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Time and Space* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 253.
[232] MED, 'tabernacle' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=orths&q1=tabernacle*&rgxp=constrained>; Ciobanu, *The Spectacle of the Body in Late Medieval England*, p. 83.
[233] See Chapter Two, 'Devotion to the Shared Flesh'.
[234] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 65.
[235] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 79-81. For further analysis on Margery Kempe's *Imitatio Mariae* as legitimizing motherhood see Liz Herbert McAvoy, 'Wonderfully turnyng & wrestyng hir body': Agonies, Ecstasies, and Gendered Performances in the Book of Margery Kempe', in *The Book of Margery Kempe: An Abridged Translation*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 2003) pp. 105-126 (pp. 116-8).

Motherhood as Martyrdom

A key attribute of Mary's sanctity is her symbolic martyrdom, achieved through her empathetic suffering with Christ. As discussed, biological theories deemed Christ's flesh as solely created from Mary's blood. Through this connection of the flesh, Mary shared in Christ's suffering, resulting in her own martyrdom. Whereas Christ received the crucifixion wounds physically, Mary experienced them spiritually inside her body.[236] In the *Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden* (c. 1373), Mary recounts the parallel suffering she experienced during the crucifixion:

> Take hede to þe passion of mi son, whose membres were to me as mine awen members, and as mine awen hert, for as oþir childir were wonnt to be in þair modirs wombe so was he in mine […] Þarefore methought, when he was born of me, as halfe mi hert was born anf passed oute of me, and when he suffird, me thought | þat halfe mi hert suffird. […] I stode nerrere to his cross, and right as þat prikkes sarer and sharplier þat is nerest to þe hert, so was mi sorowe more geuouse þan was ani oþir þan stoode beside. When he loked fro þe crosse to me and I to him, þan went þe teres out mi eyen as blode oute of vainnes; and when he saw me in þat sorrowe, it encresid so his sorowe þat þe sorrowe of his awen wounds were noght allmoste felid, for þe paine he had of þe sorowe he saw in me. And þarefore I said to þe plainly, þat his sorowe was mi sorowe, for his hert was mi hert.[237]

Mary instructed Birgitta to endure Christ's suffering within her own body as she did, for his limbs and his heart are her own. The imagery presents Mary's sorrowful tears as parallel to the suffering her son feels in his bodily wounds; Christ can see his pain mirrored in his mother. Mary emphasises the connection she has with Christ through the symbolism of the heart. The heart typically connotes ideas of love, devotion, and passion. The 'immaculate heart of Mary', usually depicted pierced with seven swords due to Simeon's prophecy, represented the sorrow

[236] Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 170-171. Also see Chapter Two of this thesis, 'The Second Eve – Exalting the 'Opened Woman''.
[237] 'Book 1: Chapter XXXV', in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, p. 63 (p. 63).

and shared suffering Mary experienced with her son.[238] As Mary states, 'when mi son was scourged and pricked, it was to me as mine awen hert had been scourged and pricked.'[239] The bodily boundaries between Christ and Mary are blurred: they are presented as a unit, a singular body, or as Mary suggests, 'one hert'.[240] The idea of Mary and Christ occupying one body can be linked to the metaphorical representation of the Church as the body of Christ. The Church, like the human body, is comprised of many 'membres' that have various functions that operate as co-dependent parts of a whole.[241] The image of unity presented advocates the importance of the Virgin Mary's role in transmitting the word of God. The anaphoric use of the word 'hert' holds a multitude of definitions. The heart was viewed as the spiritual centre of the body and emphasised the anguish Mary and Christ experience together.[242] However, the allusions to love, blood, and the connection between the heart and the stomach in medieval biology, suggest a more intimate connection between Mary and Christ: the maternal bond.[243] Mary's closing line underlined the importance of her maternity and shared suffering, for as Adam and Eve sold the world for one apple, Mary and her son bought the world with one heart.[244] The shared flesh acted as a site of both suffering and redemption.

The linking of motherhood and suffering is a common trope in mother saints' lives of the fifteenth century. The treatment of St. Monica in John Capgrave's *Life of St. Augustine* created a miniature *vita* of the mother of Augustine. The text is not dated but is estimated to be

[238] Ellington, 'The Sword of Compassion: Mary and Passion in the Middle Ages', in *From Sacred Body*, pp. 79-101 (p. 91-94); Eleonora Rai, 'Spotless Mirror, Martyred Heart: The Heart of Mary in Jesuit Devotions (Seventeenth - Eighteenth Centuries)', in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), pp. 184-202 (p. 184).
[239] 'Book 1: Chapter XXXV', in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, p. 63 (p. 63).
[240] 'Book 1: Chapter XXXV', in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, p. 63 (p. 63).
[241] Paul Kariuki Nijiru, *Charisms and the Holy Spirit's Activity in the Body of Christ: An Exegetical-Theological Study of 1 Corinthians 12, 4-11, and Romans 12, 6-8* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2002), p. 291.
[242] Cohen, 'The Meaning of the Head in High Medieval Culture', in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Baert, Traninger and Santing, pp. 59-76 (pp. 73-74).
[243] Luke DeMaitre, *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013), p. 251.
[244] 'Book 1: Chapter XXXV', in *The Liber Celestis of St. Bridget of Sweden*, p. 63 (p. 63).

written shortly before the 1451 *Life of St. Gilbert*, which is also in the manuscript BL Additional MS. 36704. The only known Middle English life of St. Monica is in Osbern Bokenham's *Abbotsford Legenda Aurea*.[245] Both Capgrave's life and Bokenham's *Abbotsford Legenda Aurea* describe St. Monica as a good Christian from childhood, who obediently served an ill-tempered husband and taught her children scripture. Little is known about St. Monica's other children.[246] In the *Confessions*, Monica mainly focuses all her attention on Augustine's conversion to Christianity. The text highlights Monica's dedication and anguish concerning her children:

> O þing he touchith her gretly longing to hir comendacion in norching of her childyrn; he seith þat sche trauayled for hem neuly a-geyn as often as she say hem do ony þing whech was a-geyn þe plesauns of our Lord; þat is to sey it greued hir as mech whan sche say hir childyrn trespas on-to our Lord as euyr it greued whan sche bare hem bodyly.[247]

Monica grieved for her children whenever they transgressed against God. The pain she experiences is greater than when she 'bare hem bodyly', indicating great torment and distress. In Hildegard of Bingen's *Causae et Curae*, the chapter *De partu* [concerning birth] describes the daunting and terrifying experience of childbirth. Birth caused women to 'tremble in terror' [*terrore hoc trement*], 'cry and shriek' [*lacrimis et eiulatu*], and 'fear the end of the world is coming' [*in fine temporum terra*].[248] Capgrave's text continues to link St. Monica's suffering

[245] The Advocates Library, 'Legenda Aurea', *The Faculty of Advocates* (2020) <http://www.advocates.org.uk/faculty-of-advocates/the-advocates-library/significant-finds-at-abbotsford/legenda-aurea> [accessed 03 April 2020].
[246] Edinburgh, The Advocates Library, MS Abbotsford, fols 101^{v}-102^{r}. I consulted the digital facsimile available online: The Advocates Library, 'Legenda Aurea', *The Faculty of Advocates* (2020) < http://lib1.advocates.org.uk/legenda/> [accessed 06 October 2020]. Simon Horobin has published an edited edition of this manuscript this year, see *Bokenham's Lives of the Saints*, ed. by Horobin. For the first evaluation of St. Monica's life see Alice E. Spencer, 'Augustine and Monica in the Abbotsford "Legenda Aurea"', *SELIM. Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature*, 24, 1 (2019), 135-148.
[247] 'Life of Saint Augustine', in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine*, ed. by Munro, pp. 1-60 (pp. 6-7).
[248] Hildegard of Bingen, *Causae et Curae*, book 2, 'de partu', 105. Quoted in Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 101.

to the physical pain of motherhood throughout the hagiography. She prays daily for Augustine, as his absences give her 'mor sorow for him þan euyr sche had to bryng him forth on-to þe world'.[249] When she discovered he had fallen into heresy, 'sche wept and sorowid more hertly þan women do þat folow her childryn to þe graue'.[250] Monica's anguish is greater than childbirth or bereavement; her experience of motherhood acts as a type of martyrdom.

In hagiography, martyrdom held a status that impacted on how sanctity was achieved and performed. Whereas the *vita* demonstrated how the saint lived differently from others in society, typically as a hermit or within a religious order, the *passio* recounted a dynamic narrative of good and evil, martyr and tyrant.[251] In mother saints' narratives, the saints live a lay and religious life, sometimes simultaneously. The complex blend of adhering to social pressures while desiring to devote their bodies to Christ creates the saint's *passio*. Their martyrdom is a metaphorical battle between their social and natural bodies. In the hagiographies of St. Sophia and St. Felicity, this metaphor becomes starkly literal.

In Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, St. Sophia and St. Felicity endure martyrdoms through their children. St. Sophia watched her daughters Faith, Hope, and Charity being tortured and martyred for their faith. At their burial, Sophia finally dies at peace knowing she will be reunited with them. As Sophia had shared in their sufferings, she died 'more than a martyr'.[252] In the life of 'St. Felicity and her sons', Felicity's love for Christ is described as so strong it could not be satisfied by dying once. She experienced a 'seven-fold martyrdom', as she watched and felt the martyrdom of each of her seven sons as if she had endured it herself. The act is described as a noble gesture of motherhood, as she brought 'them forth in the Spirit, as she had borne them in the flesh'.[253] St. Felicity's sevenfold martyrdom alludes to Mary's

[249] 'Life of Saint Augustine', in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine*, p. 14.
[250] 'Life of Saint Augustine', p. 10.
[251] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, p. 186.
[252] 'St. Sophia and her Three Daughters', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 185-186; 'The Seven Brothers, Sons of Saint Felicity', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 364-365 (p. 364).
[253] 'The Seven Brothers, Sons of Saint Felicity', *The Golden Legend*, p. 364.

seven sorrows, which originated from Luke 2:35 when Simeon prophesied that a sword would pierce Mary's soul. The motif of Mary's pierced heart encompasses her sorrow and compassion for the sufferings of her son, which was commonly described as a type of martyrdom throughout the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.[254] Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1153) and Michel Menot (c. 1440-1518) declared that Mary's shared experience with Christ at Calvary was 'the extreme punishment of the martyrs'.[255] Gabriel Barletta (c. -1480) wrote that Mary's martyrdom exceeded that of all other martyrs, 'first because hers was a martyrdom of love, theirs of faith. Second, the others were punished in their bodies, but she in her heart. Third because others suffered after Christ, but she with Christ, and in Christ and by the same blows of Christ'.[256] Motherhood and faith are interconnected through the sacrifice of the maternal body for a higher good: the love of Christ.

The sacrifice of the maternal has been widely noted in the 'Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary'. Her unnamed children are only mentioned three times in her hagiography. Larissa Tracy commented that this highlighted 'her devotion to God and the sacrifice of her maternal nature'.[257] However, the mentions of her children demonstrate her humility and obedience to God, rather than her role as a mother. When she gives her children away after her husband's death, the tone is one of necessity rather than anguish: 'so constreined by neccesite she sent her yonge children here and there for to norisshe in divers places'.[258] When her father, appalled by her actions, sends an earl to bring her home, she prays to God to shed her earthly ties:

> She praied to God that he wolde putte impediment be to her deuocion, she praied to God that he wolde putte in her herte dispisinge of all temporall thinges and

[254] Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary*, p. 228; Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus*, 21 (1992), 5-28.
[255] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 94.
[256] Gabriel Barletta, *Sermones quadragesimales et de sanctis* (Brescia: Jacobus Britannicus, 1497), 104r. 'Prima quod fruit martyrium amoris: aliorum autem fidei. Secundo quod alii sunt percussi in corpore; ista autem in corde. Tertia quod alii post Christum; ista autem cum Christo et in Christo et eodem ictu quod Christus.' Quoted in Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, p. 93.
[257] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 63.
[258] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 847, II. 185-6.

> withdrawe her herte from the loue of her children, and that she might with sadde and stable herte be content with all tribulacion and afflixiones. And whanne she hadde made her praiers, she saide to her seruantes: 'Oure Lorde hathe herde my praier, for y acount all temporall thinges but as felth and myre, and y loue no more myn owne children thanne the children of other mennes, and y recke of no peyne ne repreef ne dispisinge, and how y fele that y desire nor loue nothing but God.'[259]

In praying to God to take away the love of her children, St. Elizabeth mentally disowns the children she has already physically abandoned.[260] As Larissa Tracy argued, 'Elizabeth stands as an example of holy motherhood precisely because her children do not play any role in her life […] her children exist in negative'.[261] The passage reads as if she is separating herself from her maternal nature and femininity, which is often linked with acts of tenderness and kindness. Her confessor Conrad used the young people of her fellowship that she raised from childhood as tools of punishment to break her will, sending away those she showed most affection towards. Conrad explained that this was to allow her to direct all her love towards God. Therefore, in St. Elizabeth's prayer her desire to separate herself from her love of her children is not a sacrifice of her femininity and motherhood; rather, Elizabeth is asking to be relieved of the social female body that has been assigned to her flesh since birth: the maternal vessel.

The maternal is synonymous with both self-sacrifice and self-denial of the individual body, which is heralded and idealized through the figure of Mary and her double sacrifice in willingly accepting an unexpected pregnancy and her son's violent death.[262] Elizabeth's prayer acts as a denouncement of her social body that forced motherhood and marriage upon her and by extension, the dangerous 'opened' female flesh, not her maternity and femininity. When St. Elizabeth tended to the poor women's children, they called her mother.[263] Through her piety,

[259] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 850, II. 289-297.
[260] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 63.
[261] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 55.
[262] Elkins, *Mary, Mother of Martyrs*, p.x-xv; Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 165.
[263] 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', *Gilte Legende*, p. 846, II. 51-2.

St. Elizabeth re-emerges as a new kind of mother, one not from 'fleshy' lust but her own volition where she can return to her original 'enclosed' state to dedicate herself to God's work.[264] Similarly, in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, despite the relative absence of her children, her identity as a mother is apparent throughout. As Liz Herbert McAvoy commented, Margery's 'motherhood develops into a primary means of self-assertion and control and re-emerges in the language and imagery of the Book as a type of weapon used to disrupt the hegemony of male language and experience and assert the equal value of the specifically female experience.'[265] Their piety allows them to align the natural function of their social bodies, or the 'flesh', with their own desires and purpose.

In contrast to St. Elizabeth, St. Paula did not send her children away but left them behind. St. Paula's hagiography described her as the model of marital obedience and motherly love; when her husband and children die, she grieves as if she 'hadde deide for sorough' and felt like 'she was euer in perell of deth'.[266] Even after her conversion, St. Paula still expressed great anguish at leaving her children to travel to the Holy Land:

> Here brother, her cosynes, hir frendes, and yet most of all her owne children folued her. But the sayle was drawen vp and the ship driuen forthe withe the condyt of ores, and the litell Thoroche helde up her hondes beseching vpon the riuage, and Rufine [redy to be maried] praied her to abide his weddyng and halff deied in wepyng, and fe[l]onye in her sones and pitee in God. And she vnknowne herself and she was tormented in her bowels right as men hadde drawe oute of her membres, and she faught withe sorugh and sofered plenier creaunce hem ayeinst the right of nature, and [though] that reioysing [her] corage oueited the loue of children to be grettest after kynde yet she lefte hem all for the loue of God.[267]

[264] Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies*, p. 122.
[265] Liz Herbert McAvoy, 'Motherhood: The Book of Margery Kempe', *Medieval Feminist Newsletter*, 24 (1997), 23-26.
[266] *Women of the Gilte Legende,* p. 43; 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende,* p. 135, II. 30-33, p. 139, II. 171-178.
[267] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende,* p. 135, II. 29-51.

These words continue to link motherhood with suffering, as well as introducing the new theme of the shared suffering between child and mother. Paula's young son Thoroche, and older daughter Rufine, are described as 'half dead in weeping', which mirrors how the text described Paula's pain at the separation of her family. Paula's pain is also situated in her 'bowels' and portrayed as if men had disembowelled her, an extreme method of torture and execution that involved the removal of the gastrointestinal tract. In late medieval biology, the bowel and womb are synonymous, as it was believed these two organs were fused together.[268] This belief anatomically assigns women to the socially gendered role of reproduction and nourishment.[269] This link between the bowel and womb is more explicit towards the end of St. Paula's life. She is described as still mourning for her husband and children. Despite her faith protecting her against her motherly sorrow, 'the bowels of the moder were trouble'.[270] Her suffering is described as situated in the flesh and linked to her 'right of nature' which denotes her maternity as an innate, moral duty that she must adhere to. The graphic imagery of bodily torture against her inherent character demonstrates that St. Paula's separation from her children is a type of martyrdom: for God's love, she must sacrifice her motherhood and the social body that has been forced upon her.

Significant to St. Paula's hagiography, however, is her daughter Eustochium who followed her on her spiritual journey and becomes a consecrated virgin. Eustochium is heralded throughout the text, praised as a 'precious iuell in holy places in the Chirche of virginite' and following in her mother's virtuous nature.[271] At St. Paula's death, Eustochium is reported to have expressed extreme anguish and could not be parted from her body:

[268] MED, 'bowels' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=orths&q1=bowel*&rgxp=constrained>; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic*, p. 125
[269] Scott A. Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 93
[270] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 139, II. 171-178.
[271] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 135, I. 25, p. 136, II. 51-52, pp. 139-140, II. 186-189.

> Eustoche the worshipfull virgine doughter of her myght not be drawe from her moder, kissing her and euer hauing her eyen to her visage, and enbraced the body and wolde haue bene beried withe her moder.[272]

The text again plays with the theme of the mother and child's shared suffering, using the same lexicon of weeping and death. St. Paula's separation from her children left her always 'in peril of death'; likewise, Eustochium desires to be buried with her mother. Anke Bernau observed that parents uniting in faith demonstrated idealised gendered and familial relationships.[273] Through their bond, Paula and Eustochium's relationship stands in contrast to the tumultuous family life presented in the virgin martyr narratives.[274] The gendered role reversal in this passage, I contest, offers a reclamation of the maternal sacrificial body represented by the bleeding crucified Christ. The image of the dead Paula and her daughter alludes to the most recognisable scene of shared suffering: the Virgin Mary embracing the lifeless crucified body of Christ. The pietà is a widespread representation of Mary's sorrowful motherhood. However, the image here is inverted: Eustochium becomes the embracing sorrowful mother, whereas St. Paula has taken on the role of the dutiful, sacrificial child. This reversal of roles demonstrates how St. Paula's sacrifice has allowed her daughter to live a sinless life as a virgin, a role she was unable to choose for herself. In her death, St. Paula represents both Christ and Mary (as she remains Eustochium's mother despite this image reversal), highlighting their intrinsically linked relationship through their shared flesh and suffering.

St. Paula's decision to dedicate her life to God can be read as one of 'spiritual motherhood'. Luce Irigaray defined 'spiritual motherhood' as an exchange between women that does not consider or reduce them to parts of the patriarchal exchange based on their use or value or the biological definition of motherhood.[275] Irigaray argued that women's value has

[272] 'St. Paula', *Gilte Legende*, p. 140, II. 215-218.
[273] Bernau, 'Gender and Sexuality', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, p. 108.
[274] See Chapter Two.
[275] Alison Martin, *Luce Irigaray and the Question of the Divine* (London: Maney Publishing, 2000), p. 207.

always been assigned in relation to men: 'the production of women, signs and commodities is always referred back to men [..] and they always pass from one man to another, from one group of men to another.'[276] Likewise, in looking at contemporary acts of maternal sacrifice Anna Mercedes argued that in some instances, acts of 'self-giving [..] can [..] function as a resistance strategy against patriarchy and other forms of oppression'.[277] Consequently, St. Paula's sacrifice in exchanging her domestic life for one of devotion removes her daughter from the cultural exchange that forced marriage and motherhood onto her body. Her self-sacrifice becomes a narrative of reclaiming and nurturing the feminine through her daughters' subjective 'natural' body and agency, further indicating the redemptive properties of the flesh.

The reclamation narrative arc connected with motherly sacrifice and suffering is also apparent in Capgrave's *Life of St. Augustine.* When St. Monica discovered her son had turned to a heretical lifestyle, she received a vision from God. She dreamt she encountered an angel, while stood by a 'fair tre, planed al rith a reule'.[278] She is described as being in a state of constant physical and spiritual affliction; she is in great 'tribulacion and weping', crying at the 'losse of [her] son Augustin'. The angel consolingly told her that 'hir son stand in the same reule where-as sche stood'.[279] The tree holds great symbolic power in medieval art, signifying the tree of knowledge of good and evil, fertility, and genealogy.[280] Monica's vision also foreshadows the moment St. Augustine throws himself on the ground under a fig tree and prays

[276] Irigaray, 'Women on the Market', in *The Sex is Not One*, pp. 170-191 (p. 171).
[277] Anna Mercedes, *Power for: Feminism and Christ's Self-Giving* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), p. 2. For further discussions on the maternal as sacrificial see Cleo McNelly Kearns, *The Virgin Mary, Monotheism and Sacrifice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); E. Ann Kaplan, *Motherhood and Representation: the Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama* (London: Routledge, 1992); Nicole J. Ruane, *Sacrifice and Gender in Biblical Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Pam Lowe, *Reproductive Health and Maternal Sacrifice: Women, Choice and Responsibility* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Peggy McCracken, 'Engendering Sacrifice: Blood Lineage, and Infanticide in Old French Literature', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 55-75; Brooke Nelson, 'A Mother's Martyrdom: Elite Christian Motherhood and the Martyrdom of Domnina', *Journals of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 1 (2016), 11-26.
[278] 'Life of Saint Augustine', in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine*, p. 10, I. 11.
[279] 'Life of Saint Augustine', p. 10, II. 8-18; *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. by J. G. Pilkington (Garden City: International Collectors Library, 1900), Book III, Chapter XIX, pp. 48-49.
[280] Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary*, p. 97.

to God; thus, alluding to the Tree of Sins (Augustine stole from a pear tree in his youth) and the Tree of the Cross.[281] The metaphor of the tree planted as straight as a ruler alludes to the shared genealogical roots and faith between St. Monica and St. Augustine. She is comforted by the angel's words, taking them to mean that one day Augustine will live the same moral and faithful life that she does.

Environmental imagery followed St. Monica and St. Augustine, from a shared sense of grief to a shared passion of Christ. The text speaks of their time in Ostia together:

> As his moder and he stood lenying out at a wyndown and lokyng in a gardeyn whech longid on-to her, in fer fro pres of puple þus a-line, þei too talked ful sobirly of þe euyr-lestyn lif whech is ordeyned for blissid soules. Thei talked so long þereof and lyft up her hertis in contemplacion of þat holy place, þat þei had for-gete in maner þis world and all erdly þing so were þei rauyschid with her holy wordis. Thei stood stille both a grete while ad þout swech þingis as þei coude not vttyr,and eke ageyn in her holy communicacioun þei fell.[282]

St. Monica and St. Augustine stand together, looking out upon a garden reminiscent of the setting in which St. Monica's vision and St. Augustine's redemption took place in Milan. The text refers to them as 'a-line' [aligned in a straight line], joined in both faith and lineage. As they share a holy communion the tone is not of sacrifice and suffering, but joy and intimacy. Shortly after their shared contemplation unites them, Monica dies. St. Augustine made a passionate speech to God, exalting his mother's virtue and asking Him to receive her graciously. Augustine pleaded:

> Her for me þe medycyne of þoo woundis whech þi son souered in his body for þe helth of our soules. [..] I hope veryly þat þou hast doo now all þat I pray þe, but ȝet alowe my good wil whech i offer on-to þe for hir as a deute of hir child. Sche bond hir soul on-to þe prys of thi blod whil sche lyued, for þere was no day left but sche

[281] 'Life of Saint Augustine,' in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine*, pp. 21-22; McLean, *Medieval English Gardens*, p. 125.
[282] 'Life of Saint Augustine', p. 32, II. 2-10; *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book IX, Chapter IX, pp. 178-179.

> wold be present where þe sacrifise and þe memory of þi holy blod schuld be had in mynd.[283]

Augustine calls on God to recognise the blood of the wounds which Christ shed in his body for the salvation of humanity. This prayer is his duty as Monica's son because she pledged her soul for the price of his blood while he lived. Monica's dedication to saving her son's soul from his sins is paralleled with that of Christ's. As Christ sacrificed his life for humanity, Monica sacrificed her life for the redemption of her son.

The lexicon of shared flesh and sacrifice between Monica and Augustine is emphasized further in his closing stanza, where he ascribes his birth solely to Monica: 'my moder [..] be whose flesch I was brout forth on-to þis world'. As discussed previously, in medieval biology the mother's blood sustained the child in the womb and then converted into breast milk to feed the baby outside of the womb; thus metaphorically tying together the womb and blood to digestion and eating. In Hippocratic theory, breast milk was thought to be a source of food and a means of transmitting moral values to a child.[284] Pertinently, St. Margaret of Antioch's conversion to Christianity was due to being nursed by a Christian wet nurse.[285] As St. Augustine inherited his flesh from his mother, by extension he also gained her morals. In St. Augustine's speech, the metaphor of the tree comes full circle – the body of the mother acts as a sacrificial source of both nourishment and virtue transmitted through their shared bloodlines.[286] In St. Monica's death, she amalgamates both Mary and Christ, demonstrating

[283] 'Life of Saint Augustine,' in *John Capgrave's St. Augustine*, p. 33, II. 2130-; *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book IX, Chapter IX, pp. 180-184.
[284] Helen King, *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) p. 143.
[285] Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies*, p. 81-82.
[286] The imagery also alludes to the Jesse tree, the representation of Christ's genealogical line as a tree with Jesse, the father of David, and his descendants on branching foliage. See Marvin A. Sweeney, 'Jesse, Root/Stump of', in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its reception*, ed. by Dale C. Allison Jr., Hans-Josef Klauck, Bernard McGinn, Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, C. L. Seow, Hermann Speickermann, Barry Walfisch and Eric Jozef Ziolkowski (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999). Available online at: Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception Online, 'Jesse, Root/Stump of', *Walter De Gruyter GmbH* (2011-2020) <https://doi.org/10.1515/ebr.jesserootstumpof> [accessed 6 October 2020].

both the shared suffering and passions of the flesh of the mother and motherhood as a salvific martyrdom.

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Mother saints, like virgin martyrs, use the figures of Mary and Christ to legitimise their female bodies and redeem the 'flesh'– a linguistic motif not used in the hagiographies of male saints. The language of childbirth and motherhood underlines their shared experiences with the Virgin Mary and legitimise their non-normative bodies in a religious space. In using the language and experiences of their social bodies, their natural bodies undergo a recoding through faith that redefines how their bodies function in society and illustrates the redemptive properties of the flesh. The shared flesh of Mary and Christ acts as a genre of discourse in which to adopt to disrupt the culture text emplaced on the body.[287] St. Anne's closed womb is opened by God to house the shared flesh of Christ and Mary. St. Elizabeth becomes a new mother out of God's charity, not carnal lust. St. Paula's act of spiritual motherhood removes her daughter Eustochium from the cultural exchange, which forced marriage and childbirth on the female body. St. Monica's Christ-like sacrifice to redeem the soul of her son shows motherhood as the ultimate salvific martyrdom. In using recognised feminine symbols, these mother saints do not reject birth and children to become men, as Jerome recommended, but demonstrate a model of female holiness that is not limited to the virginal 'enclosed' body. As the apostle Paul wrote, 'there is no […] male or female; for you are all one in Christ'.[288] With sex and gender seen as a singular concept in medieval thought, there is an argument for gender neutrality in Jerome's statement.[289] The next chapter further investigates this concept and analyses the lives of trans* saints.

[287] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, p. 231.
[288] Galatians 3:28.
[289] Some theologians believed the division of the sexes was not part of God's plan but a product of the fall. See John Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Idea* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 10-16.

Chapter 4
Embodying and Uniting Perfect Masculinity and Perfect Femininity: the Trans* Saints as Virgin Mothers and Modest Monks

> A Holy virgine, foryeue me, for I haue to sore offended God and the. Thou saidest in thi gret mekenesse: "Pater, Paccani", but I may saie for my gret wickednesse: "Mater et Soror".[1]

Introduction

Previous chapters demonstrated how the shared flesh of Mary and Christ could be used as a discourse upon the flesh to articulate it as a redemptive tool. Some virgin martyrs and mother saints did not reject their female bodies or maternity in their piety; rather, they demonstrated a range of holiness which was not limited to the virginal 'enclosed body'. This chapter will continue examining the gendered body through a lens of medieval Christianity and the shared flesh in connection with the hagiographies of trans* saints. As previously discussed, Jerome of Stridon's (c. 347-420AD), commentary on the Ephesians that equated femaleness with the flesh and birth and maleness with the soul and piety demonstrated the cultural binarism of the sexed body but also the fluidity of medieval gender.[2] The body was separated into 'feminine', and 'masculine' attributes that one could acquire. The notion of a female saint 'becoming man' in their piety and maleness as a moral quality in religious doctrine incites a paradoxical ideology that both encouraged and discouraged female masculinity. The hagiographies of the trans* saints most clearly represent this paradox.[3] Whereas the majority of previous scholarship has read the trans* saints as rejecting 'femininity' and 'womanhood', this chapter demonstrates how these female saints become both 'perfect men' and 'perfect women' through the shared

[1] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 371-373 (p. 373, II. 61-64).
[2] In St. Jerome's *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, he writes 'as long as woman is for birth and children, she is as different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called a man'. Vern L. Bullough translation quoted in 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. by Lees, Fenster and McNamara, pp. 31-46 (p. 32).
[3] Although previous research has referred to these hagiographies as 'transvestite' saints, I have decided to use the word trans*, which is an inclusive term that includes people who identify as transgender, gender-fluid, genderqueer, agender, and cross-dressers. See the Introduction, 'Methodology: The Construction of the Saint's Flesh' for information on terminology usage.

flesh of Mary and Christ. By examining the three over-arching themes in this thesis, depictions of virginity, motherhood and lineage, I will conclude that the trans* saints exemplify the nuance of medieval Christianity's relationship with gender.

Overview of the field

With the emergence of trans theory in the field of medieval studies, the trans* saint is currently undergoing a reexamination. Past scholarship has defined this category of hagiographies as 'transvestite' saints.[4] The term 'transvestite' has become outdated in modern terminology due to its association with the medical disorder described in 1910 by Magnus Hirschfeld. The medical definition, which solely focused on male 'transvestites', determined that it was a disorder based upon unconscious homosexuality, absent or passive fathers, and castration anxiety in which the 'patients' desired to become 'phallic women'. Due to the term 'transvestite' being linked to sexuality rather than gender expression, I have decided to use the modern term trans*, an inclusive term that includes people who identify as transgender (a person whose gender identity does not correspond to their sex assigned at birth), gender-fluid (a person who does not identify themselves as having a fixed gender), genderqueer (a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female gender), agender (a person who does not identify as belonging to a particular gender) and cross-dressers (those who dress in and act in the style of the gender opposite to the one they were assigned at birth but does not necessarily wish to change their gender, nor are they doing it for entertainment or social purposes).[5] I did not feel

[4] Oxford University Press, 'trans*, *Oxford English Dictionary* (2019) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63485327?rskey=X8xP3H&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 15 December 2019].
[5] Oxford University Press, 'trans*, *Oxford English Dictionary* (2019) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63485327?rskey=X8xP3H&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 15 December 2019].

it was appropriate to assign a fixed gendered reading for this category of saints. Therefore, I have used they/their pronouns throughout this chapter when discussing the saints.[6]

I am challenging the reliance on binary models of gender and the aspect of erasure. Vern Bullough's examination of transvestism in the middle ages equated female cross-dressing with status gain due to the connection of maleness with superiority and rationality. 'Society, in fact, encourage[d] women to assume male roles as a sign of their superiority to other women'.[7] Bullough concluded that the easiest way for women to 'become men' in their piety, was to deny their sexuality and don male clothing.[8] This motif occurred in a saint's hagiography typically during a moment of crisis, with the act of cross-dressing denoting 'a breaking with [their] former existence'.[9] The language used promotes erasure. In a similar manner to the scholarship on mother saints that argued they shunned motherhood in their piety, trans* saints are said to reject womanhood entirely. Stephen J. Davis and Larissa Tracey have discussed the trans* saints' dismissal of womanhood as a way to erase the sins inherently connected to the female flesh.[10] Karl Whittington has noted that the 'becoming male' theme in the hagiographies demonstrated the saints 'becoming more perfect'.[11] Likewise, Roy Gopa's study on the Latin 'Life of St. Eugenia' from the Cotton Corpus Legendary discussed how the language praised the saint through highlighting women's inferiority.[12] The character of Melancia, who attempts to seduce Eugenia, is used to demonstrate how Eugenia has transcended the weakness of her sex. Whereas Melancia has succumbed to the natural carnality of womanhood, Eugenia's

[6] For further information see fn. 193 of this thesis's Introduction.
[7] Vern Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', *American Journal of Sociology*, 79, 6 (1974), 1381-1394 (p. 1393).
[8] Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', p. 1383.
[9] Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', p. 1386.
[10] Stephen J. Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex: Intertextuality and Gender in Early Christian Legends of Holy Woman Disguises as Men', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 10, 1 (2002), 1-36 (pp. 2-3); *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 17.
[11] Whittington, 'Medieval', p. 126.
[12] Roy Gopa, 'A Virgin acts Manfully: Aelfric's Life of St. Eugenia and the Latin Versions', *Leeds Studies in English*, 23 (1992), 1-29.

virginity and male dress symbolise her 'courage' to reject her inferior sex.[13] The ambiguous gender identity in the trans* saints' lives has led them to be considered a 'third gender'. Building upon Kathryn M. Ringrose's examination of eunuchs, Davies noted that the comparison to trans* saints to eunuchs emphasised their identity as different to men and women.[14] In viewing the trans* saint as a eunuch, their piety is not considered female or fully male.[15] The definition of the eunuch is one who is physically incapable of procreating due to the removal of the testes and/or penis, and who has withdrawn from the world.[16] With this definition in mind, this chapter challenges the notion of the trans* saints erasing female identities or recognition as an ambiguous third gender. The legends of trans* saints encompass both aspects of femininity and masculinity. They do not reject womanhood when joining a monastery but continue to display positive feminine traits, such as meekness and humility, and participate in childrearing.

The notion of the trans* saint rejecting their femininity it also problematic when considering how the saints were celebrated. The saints are most widely recognised through their female names and are celebrated in iconography, wearing female dress, with their long hair restored. Robert Mills has observed this as an instance of trans erasure. Mills's study on the iconography of St. Eugenia identified the moment when they expose their breasts as a widely recognised image of the saint that placed them in a liminal position between genders.[17] Anna Kłosowska also built upon notions of becoming and transitioning from a trans theory perspective.[18] In examining the medieval romance Yde de Olive (c. 1260-1310), Kłosowska

[13] Gopa, 'A Virgin acts Manfully: Aelfric's Life of St. Eugenia and the Latin Versions', p. 13.
[14] Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', p. 21; Kathryn M. Ringrose, 'Living in the Shadows: Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium', in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. by Gilbert Herdt (New York: Zone Books, 1994), pp. 85-109.
[15] Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', p. 23.
[16] Ringrose, 'Living in the Shadows: Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium', p. 86.
[17] Robert Mills, 'Visibly Trans? Picturing Saint Eugenia in Medieval Art', *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 5, 4 (2018), 540-564 (pp. 548-9). Also see Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 193-4.
[18] Anna Kłosowska, 'Premodern trans and queer in French manuscripts and early printed text', *postmedieval*, 9 (2018), 349-366 (p. 350).

argued that Yde's achievement of 'full humanness' after their divine intervention can be interpreted as a positive representation of queer identity.[19] Romance fiction and trans* saints' hagiographies exhibit fluid identities that highlighted how gender identity could be 'unmade in fiction and in real life'.[20] For the latter point, Kłosowska referred to court documents where people were punished for adopting different gendered identities to those assigned at birth.[21] Kłosowska also pointed out that while FTM (female to male) transition accounts were more common due to man's superiority, the Christic body was a powerful account of MTF (male to female) transition.[22] The feminisation of Christ's body problematises the argument of feminine attributes being considered inferior qualities in devotion. As discussed earlier, male saints often adopted 'feminine' characteristics, such as meekness and humility, to closer associate their bodies with Christ.[23]

Throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how the saint does not reject masculinity or femininity in their piety but adopts both traits. Likewise, Ilse Friesen concluded that the image of the bearded saint St. Wilgefortis was popular as she was an androgynous, all-encompassing, accessible figure of veneration.[24] Lewis Wallace argued the terms 'androgyny' and 'ambiguity' are static in tone.[25] I agree with this sentiment and with Wallace's chosen term of 'gendered transformations'.[26] As Elizabeth Castelli has argued, the act of cutting one's hair short and donning male disguise was used to demonstrated how religion called for personal

[19] Kłosowska, 'Premodern trans and queer in French manuscripts and early printed text', p. 353.
[20] Kłosowska, 'Premodern trans and queer in French manuscripts and early printed text', p. 353.
[21] Kłosowska, 'Premodern trans and queer in French manuscripts and early printed text', p. 353.
[22] Kłosowska, 'Premodern trans and queer in French manuscripts and early printed text', p. 362.
[23] See Chapter One, 'The Saint in Medieval Hagiography' which details Caroline Walker Bynum's theory of male saints adopting gendered images of reversal: Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality', in *Fragmentation and Redemption,* pp. 27-52.
[24] Isle Friesen, *The Female Crucifix: Images of Wilgefortis since the Middle Ages* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001), pp. 46-47.
[25] Lewis Wallace, 'Bearded Woman, Female Christ: Gendered Transformations in the Legends and Cults of Saint Wilgefortis', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 30, 1 (2013), 43-63.
[26] Wallace, 'Bearded Woman, Female Christ', p. 44

transformation.[27] Similarly, Laila Abdalla has argued that, in their male disguise, trans* saints had the power to choose their own identities, not one bestowed on them by the patriarchy.[28] The trans* saint expresses an 'ideal' female role through their male disguise of the virgin, mystic or mother.[29] This chapter builds upon Abdalla's analysis by demonstrating how the trans* saints occupied multiple roles simultaneously. They are not gender ambiguous but represent the fluid one-sexed body model that takes on positive 'feminine' and 'masculine' attributes. They do not erase their sex, but concurrently occupy male and female roles within one body that imitates the shared flesh of Mary and Christ.

Maleness as a Desired Quality

Thomas Laqueur postulated that 'woman alone seems to have 'gender' since the category itself is defined as that aspect of social relations based on differences between the sexes in which the standard has always been man'.[30] Reading 'maleness' as the default or standard can also be useful in a late medieval timeframe, where essentially men and women were seen as superior and inferior versions of the same organism; the perfect as opposed to the imperfect.[31] As previously discussed, this is an important factor in understanding medieval gender as a fluid concept. As man and woman were variations of the same biological structures, 'maleness' and 'femaleness' were attributes that the opposite sex could adopt or acquire. Caroline Walker Bynum demonstrated how male hagiographies used images of gender reversal to express liminality. Male saints took on female motifs to transform from 'divine' men of rationality to humble, weak, spiritual 'women', stripped of status and power, to connect with Christ's

[27] Castelli, '"I Will Make Mary Male": Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity', in *Body Guards,* ed. by Epstein and Straub, pp. 29-49 (pp. 44-47).
[28] Laila Abdalla, 'Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman', in *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by S. C. Karant-Nunn (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 17-37.
[29] Abdalla, 'Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman', p. 18.
[30] Laqueur, *Making* Sex, p. 22.
[31] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in The Middle* Ages, pp. 171-177; Bynum, *Fragmentation and* Redemption, pp. 220-221. For an overview of gender in the late medieval period, see this thesis's Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages'.

humanity.[32] However, male saints taking on female attributes only appears to apply to interior qualities (e.g. humility), not exterior qualities such as clothing.

In Vern Bullough's examination of transvestites in the middle ages, he concluded that the roles of the sexes had influenced Western attitudes. Whereas the female cross-dresser was tolerated, the male cross-dresser had been actively discouraged due to its association with status loss and explicit sexual activities.[33] For example, when St. Jerome was set to become pope, a group of jealous monks tricked him into wearing a woman's dress to matins, which saw him lose the appointment. In Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea's* (c. 1259-1266) 'Life of Saint Jerome', the French liturgist and theologian John Beleth (c. 1135-1182) claimed that the monks set out the woman's clothing to create a 'false impression' of Jerome.[34] The monks were resentful as Jerome denounced their lifestyles as 'lascivious', so set out the garment to make it look like he had a woman in his room.[35] This episode demonstrates why male cross-dressing was nearly non-existent in religious representation. A man who adopted female dress was berated and suspected of illicit sexual activities. However, female cross-dressing became a hagiographical category: the 'holy transvestite' saint. Bullough's analysis of transvestite saints determined that females turned to cross-dressing when they experienced a life crisis; the clothing acts as a break with their previous life. However, this is not to say female crossdressing was permitted or encouraged. As discussed below, the clothing in these saints' lives did not act as a literal means of imitation but as a metaphor for attaining the merits of the higher sex.[36]

[32] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy* Fast, pp. 25-35, 287.
[33] Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', pp. 1381-1394.
[34] 'St. Jerome', *The Golden Legend*, pp. 597-602 (p. 598).
[35] 'St. Jerome', *The Golden Legend*, p. 598. This episode is also in Winter, 'The Life of St. Jerome', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections*, ed. by Whatley, Thompson and Upchurch, II. 116-127.
[36] Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', pp. 1392-1393; Deuteronomy 22:5 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination under the Lord thy God'.

Virile Women

The link between being a Christian and being male or taking on male attributes was a prevailing thought from the Early Church, which praised female saints for transcending the weakness of their sex and becoming 'femina virilis' or a 'female man of God'.[37] In the Gospel of Thomas (c. 40-140AD) when Simon Peter questioned Mary Magdalene's position as a disciple, claiming 'women are not worthy of life', Christ replied 'I will draw her in so as to make her male, so that she too may become a living male spirit similar to you [..] every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.'[38] These metaphors that linked Christianity with masculinity were also in scripture, which often described virtues in terms of military terminology. Ephesians 6 urged believers to 'put on the full armour of God […] take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God'.[39] Martial rhetoric was adopted in male hagiographies to create a hybrid model of masculinity that promoted a mixture of traditional and pious values, as discussed in Chapter One. The fusion of warrior and clerical ideals, such as courage, humility, and chastity, was used to create the 'true Christian' image.[40] The sentiment of a 'masculinised' Christian was present throughout the middle ages. In the fourth century, Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397AD) wrote: 'she who does not believe is a woman and should be called by the name of her corporeal sex; but she who believes comes closer to the perfect male'.[41] Likewise, the thirteenth-century theologian Meister Eckhart argued that 'when the soul is downcast, then it is called woman; but when one recognises God

[37] Schulenburg, 'Hagiography', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 346-352 (p. 348).
[38] Gospel of Thomas 114.
[39] Ephesians 6:10-17.
[40] Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest: The Creation of a New Masculine Identity during the Crusades', in *Negotiating Clerical Identities,* ed. by Thibodeaux, pp. 185-203 (p. 186); for a further discussion on this topic, see Chapter One of this thesis.
[41] Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, ed. by M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 14:392 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1957). Translation by Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man*, p. 17. Also see Saint Ambrose, 'Expositionis in Evangelius secudum Lucum libri X' in *Patrologiae Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 26 (Paris, France: Garnier, 1887).

in oneself and seeks out God there, then it (the soul) is man.'[42] Meister Eckhart's words were reiterated in the Sister Catherine Treatise, a dialogue in Middle High German between Sister Catherine and her confessor, who, although unnamed, was thought to have been Meister Eckhart. After asking her confessor the quickest way to God, Sister Catherine concluded, 'I know very well that women can never come into heaven; they have to become men first. It is understood like this: they must perform manly deeds and must have many hearts with full strength so that they may resist themselves and all sinful things.'[43]

'Becoming male' was not meant literally. St. Jerome warned Eustochium, St. Paula's daughter, to be wary of women who 'change their garb and assume the mien of men [for they are] ashamed of being what they were born to be – women. They cut off their hair and are not ashamed to look like eunuchs'.[44] The image of a eunuch is an interesting comparison to the promotion of women 'becoming men' in their piety. Castration was largely illegal in practice, but eunuchs held a special social status, both in religious orders and royal households. Christian teachings condemned the practice while celebrating the outcome of permanent celibacy.[45] Likewise, maleness was viewed as a moral and virtuous quality woman could obtain by a strict code of conduct: 'becoming male' was embedded in language and translated to becoming

[42] Meister Eckhart, *Predigten*. *Meister Eckhart: Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*, ed. by Josef Quint (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1958), 1:337. Translation by Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man*, p. 13.
[43] *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, ed. by Bernard Mcginn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), pp. 349-87.
[44] 'St. Jerome, Letter 22: to Eustochium', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Second Series, ed. by Schaff and Wace, trans. by Fremantle, Lewis and Martley. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Letters of St. Jerome: Letter 22: To Eustochium', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> [accessed 6 January 2019] (para. 27).
[45] Ringrose, 'Living in the Shadows: Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium,' in *Third Sex, Third Gender*, ed. by Herdt, pp. 85-109. For further information on eunuchs and castration see Shaun Tougher, 'Social transformation, gender transformation? The court eunuch, 300-900', in *Gender in the early medieval world: East and West 300-900*, ed. by Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 70-82; Larissa Tracy, *Castration and culture in the Middles Ages* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013); Irvine, 'Abelard and (re)writing the male body: castration, identity, and remasculinization' in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cohen and Wheeler, pp. 87-106; Wheeler, 'Origenary Fantasies: Abelard's castration and confession', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cohen and Wheeler, pp. 107-128; Yves Ferroul, 'Abelard's blissful castration', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cohen and Wheeler, pp. 130-150; George Sidéris, 'The Rise and Fall of the High Chamberlain Eutropius: Eunuch Identity, the Third Sex and Power in Fourth-Century Byzantium', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe*, ed. by Christopher Fletcher, Sean Brady, Rachel Moss and Lucy Riall (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 63-84.

virginal, spiritual, and knowledgeable of God but still maintaining readable womanhood.[46] Therefore, the notion of 'becoming male' acts as an additional discourse that individuals can assign to their bodies, in an attempt to lessen the negative associations of the physiology already written there.[47] The 'becoming male' narrative was derived from the etymologies of 'virtus, 'virtuous', 'vir' and 'virilis' that created the Christian ideal for women, the image of the 'virago': a man-like woman who demonstrated exemplary and heroic qualities. However, as Barbara Newman established, the virago did not undermine the belief in female inferiority (arguably, its basis is entrenched in a language in which woman was always inferior). The 'virile woman' was still viewed as one in desirable female roles such as wife, bride or mother.[48] Newman argued, '"the virile woman topos" [..] functioned best in hagiography where the subject was safely dead'.[49] To further examine this paradoxical ideology that simultaneously encouraged and discouraged female masculinity, I turn to hagiographies of the trans* saints'.

The Trans* Saints

In her influential study on cross-dressing, Majorie Garber argued that the transvestite represented 'a figure that disrupts'.[50] The work of Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Julia Kristeva also focused on the potential political and sexual power of clothing and the cross-dressing subject.[51] Scholarship has centred around transgressing societal norms as a liberating

[46] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 178.
[47] This theory is derived from Shari Horner's reading of virgin martyr saints' lives. See Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, pp. 95-102.
[48] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 31.
[49] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 5.
[50] Majorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, 3rd edn. (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), p. 70.
[51] Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1992); Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990); *Mikhail Bakhtin Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).

act of political or social protest. The analysis of trans* saints' lives has tended to adhere to a similar line of thought. While the bold, defiant voices of the virgin martyrs' represented their sanctity, the trans* saints' adoption of male dress and lifestyle has been read as an effacement of womanhood and, consequently, an erasure of the sins considered natural to the female sex.[52] It has been argued that trans* saints occupied a 'third space' and destabilised binary concepts of gender identity.[53] By embodying the paradoxical and contradictory nature of church teachings towards the female sex, the trans* saint was 'a compelling sign of the hostility and yet at the same time lurid fascination with which early Christian men viewed their female counterparts.'[54] I disagree with the reading of trans* saints as a third gender, as it does not take into account how the saint disrupts and problematises the dominant cultural discourses of gender. Trans* saints break down binary concepts of gender identity by embracing the positive traits of femininity and masculinity in one body. Trans* saint hagiographies clearly show the one sex body of medieval thought that understood gender as fluid attributes that one could adopt. Their bodies cannot be considered as representative of a 'third gender' as they are perfectly balanced, not problematic or transgressive. Through Shari Horner's reading of the saint's body as a text and Sandy Stone's theory of the trans body as a genre, the 'becoming male' narrative is a key discourse for women to re-examine and rewrite the cultural discourses of their bodies.[55]

There were twenty-three hagiographies of trans* saints circulating in Europe before 1050; the popularity of these stories continued into the high and later medieval period.[56] The *Legenda Aurea* included five trans* saints: Marina, Theodore, Pelagia, Margaret Pelagia, and

[52] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 17.
[53] Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 70; Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', p. 1.
[54] Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', p. 3.
[55] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, pp. 95-102; Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, pp. 211-235.
[56] Leslie A. Donovan, *Women Saints Lives in Old English Prose* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), p. 67.

Eugenia (whose life is recorded under the names of her eunuch servants, St. Protus and St. Hyancinthus, as they all joined the monastery together). These lives are also included in the Middle English translation the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1438). Although one of the most recognised Old English trans* saints St. Euphrosyne was not included in these editions, it was one of the eight lives in the fourteenth century Vernon *Golden Legend*, from the Oxford Bodleian Library MS, eng. Poet a. 1.[57] A Middle English translation of St. Marina can also be found in the British Library Harley 2253, a fourteenth-century manuscript that included secular and religious lyrics.[58]

These lives cover a range of notions of female sanctity. St. Eugenia and St. Euphrosyne follow a virgin martyr narrative in which they turn to cross-dressing to escape marriage. St. Theodora, St. Pelagia and St. Margaret Pelagia follow the penitent saint narrative of adulterers or prostitutes who redeem their past sins by living as monks or hermits. St. Marina acts as a stand-alone saint in this category in that their decision to join a monastery is not a result of their desire to escape marriage or retain their virginity, but their father's decision to join a monastery and to take them along as a son. St. Marina experienced similar ordeals to the other trans* saints in this category. Their early life dressing and living as a young male monk begs the question as to whether Marina can genuinely be classified as a 'transvestite saint'. It is hard to define Marina as a cross-dressing saint, a transgender saint who has been referred to by their birth name instead of their chosen name, a process called deadnaming, or, as other scholars have argued, 'virtually genderless'.[59] As I do not wish to impose a specific gender identity, I

[57] Oxford, Oxford Bodleian Libraries, MS. Eng. Poet. a. 1., fols. 103^{r}-104^{v}. This manuscript also includes an edition of St. Theodora on fols. 93^{r}-93^{v}. I consulted this manuscript in person. Due to the current pandemic I have been unable to double-check the references, so I have referenced both the MS and the edited edition 'Eufrosyne', in *Sammlung altenglischer legenden, grösstentheils zum ersten male herausgegeben*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (Heilbronn: Gebr. Henninger, 1878), pp. 174-182.

[58] London, British Library, MS Harley 2253, fols. 64^{v} -65^{v}. I have consulted this manuscript in person. There is also an edited edition available. See *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript, Volume 2*, ed. and trans. by Susanna Greer Fein, David Raybin and Jan Ziolkowski (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014).

[59] The only other saint who claims to be a man is St. Margaret Pelagia, discussed later in the chapter. For arguments on St. Marina as genderless see *Women of the Gilte Legende*, pp. 18-19; Susanna Fein, 'A Saint Geynest under Gore: Marina and the Love Lyrics of the Seventh Quire', in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes,*

refer to St. Marina in this chapter using the gender-neutral 'Maurine'.[60] Common to all these lives is that they are all women sanctified because their community believed them to be male, and each one experienced a crisis or sexual threat to their body.

Virginity and the Trans* Saints

In a comparable narrative pattern to that of the virgin martyrs and mother saints discussed in previous chapters, the trans* saints' decisions to cut their hair and wear male clothing comes during a period of crisis.[61] Previous scholarship has argued that donning male disguise 'denote[s] a breaking with her [the saint's] former existence'.[62] I argue it is a way of retaining their current selves whilst rejecting social pressure. This reading is evident in that the crisis that motivated the majority of trans* saints is the societal pressure to marry.

The *Gilte Legende's* lives of St. Eugenia and St. Margaret Pelagia follow a typical virgin martyr narrative framework. Both saints are described as chaste virgins from noble backgrounds. St. Margaret Pelagia's opening description concentrates on their purity and faith, stating they were 'a right noble and a faire virgine ful of riches [..] so ententif to kepe honeste and chastite that she refused to be seyn of men in all wise'.[63] St. Eugenia's description is centred on their lineage and education: as the daughter of the ruler of Alexandria, Phillip, they belonged to the 'right noble kindred of Romaynes' and was 'perfit in all the artes liberall'.[64]

Contents, and Scribal contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253, ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 352-376 (p. 363). Referring to a transgender individual by their birth name instead of their chosen name is called 'deadnaming'. See Gutt, Spencer-Hall, 'Trans & Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Spencer-Hall and Gutt, pp. 19-20. Available online at: Blake Gutt, Alicia Spencer-Hall, 'LHMP: A Guide to Gender-Inclusive Language for Historians', *Alpennia (2019)* <https://www.alpennia.com/blog/lhmp-guide-gender-inclusive-language-historians> [accessed 15 June 2020].

[60] Although the *Gilte Legende* lists St. Maurine's life as St. Marina in the index, the hagiography calls them 'Maurine' or spelling various of this gender-neutral version of their name throughout. 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 371-373.

[61] Caroline Walker Bynum's interpretation is that the central focus of female saints' *vitae* is continuity. See Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*. Bullough refers to the trans* saints' decision to don male disguise as during a life 'crisis'. See Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', p. 1386.

[62] Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', p. 1386.

[63] 'St. Margaret Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 747-748 (p. 747, II. 1-5).

[64] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 666-670 (p. 666, II. 2-7).

In the Vernon *Golden Legend*, 'The life of St. Euphrosyne' extended the narrative convention further by setting up Euphrosyne's backstory as parallel to that of the Virgin Mary's. Like Mary's parents Joachim and Anne, Euphrosyne's father Pathnucius, an authoritative nobleman of Alexandria, took a wife of 'grete blode, þe wȝuche was euere meoke & gode. But fruit com non bitwene hem two.'[65] The inability to conceive caused Euphrosyne's parents' great distress, as it did for Joachim and Anne. Both of Euphrosyne's parents prayed to God to send them a child, and her father Pathnucius visited a holy man in an abbey for assistance. Pathnucius dwelled with the abbot, who took pity on him and prayed to God to send Pathnucius a child if that was His will. Christ granted the abbot his prayer, and Pathnucius's wife 'conseiued & bar a childe, a douhtur, þat was meke & mylde'.[66] The language here is similarly allusive to how Anne conceived Mary, which was a disputed topic during the period.[67] However, the text explicitly states that 'Jhesu Crist […] graunted þe abbot al his bone'.[68] Pathnucius's decision to dwell in the monastery and the abbot's prayers are implied to have led to Euphrosyne's conception. Christ does not answer Euphrosyne's unnamed mother's prayers, but that of the abbot, thus excluding the matrilineal from conception. This mirrors Christ's lineage in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (c. 80-100AD), which traced his ancestry to the house of David through his earthly father, Joseph.[69] As Christ was biologically unrelated to Joseph, this was later reimagined through the Virgin Mary and the matrilineal image of the holy kindship.[70] Paul Szarmach has commented that, 'Euphrosyne is daughter to father and abbot, a biological impossibility of course but a thematic reality for these father figures'.[71] In

[65] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 174, II. 5-7.
[66] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 174, II. 39-40.
[67] For an overview on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception see Chapter Two, 'The Virgin Mary as Mother, Bride, and Lover'.
[68] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 174, II. 37-38.
[69] Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Smith and Leyser, pp. 21-41 (p. 25).
[70] See Chapter Three, 'St. Anne and the Birth of the Virgin'.
[71] Paul E. Szarmach, 'St. Euphrosyne: Holy Transvestite', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 353-365 (p. 355).

the following lines, Euphrosyne's nameless mother is brought to the abbey to give birth to Euphrosyne, is present for her daughter's christening, and then dies, eradicating the maternal from the text. The timing of Euphrosyne's mother's death with Euphrosyne's christening indicates the completion of her mother's job of childrearing; Euphrosyne is ready to be passed on, either in holy matrimony to God or a noble suitor. Poignantly, it is Euphrosyne's father who plays the role of 'teacher' in the text; he teaches them 'boþe wit & wisdam […] [and] hire loos sprong þorw al þe cite þat a wisor creature miȝte non be'.[72] Euphrosyne is embedded in a patriarchal lineage in which their mother functions only as an unnamed vessel in which to carry and bear children through man and God's will.

The crossroad in some of the trans* saints' lives, where they must choose between marriage and God, is demonstrated as a crisis that leads to them donning male disguise. Like a virgin martyr narrative, St. Margaret Pelagia, St. Eugenia and St. Euphrosyne are all beautiful daughters of noblemen, entered into arranged marriages when they came of age. At first, the saints are not daunted by this next stage in their lives. St. Eugenia believed it was essential for them to choose a husband of good manners and noble kindred.[73] However, after they study the doctrine of St. Paul and hear the Christians sing outside the walls of Alexandria, they questioned the teachings of the great philosophers. Eugenia and her eunuch servants (who are also fellow students) made the decision to follow Christ. Eugenia dressed in the habit of a man and became known as Frere Eugenie.[74] Likewise, St. Euphrosyne's father is approached by a nobleman who wants his son to marry sixteen-year-old Euphrosyne. Pathnucius took Euphrosyne to the abbey to pray for them in marriage and the abbot 'blessed hire wiþ goode chere'.[75] Despite this blessing, Euphrosyne confided in a monk that they desired a monastic life but feared the wrath of their father; they plead 'þou blesse me nou & for me pray, and þe

[72] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, pp. 174-5, II. 56-60.
[73] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 175, II. 10-11.
[74] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 667, II. 34-40.
[75] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 175, II. 84.

her of myn hed þou schere away!'[76] The monk agreed to help, and Euphrosyne joined a monastery, believing that their father would discover them if they went to a nunnery, and adopted the name Smaragdus.[77]

St. Margaret Pelagia made it to their wedding day, but in the bedchamber with their husband 'considered how þe harm and losse of here virginite'.[78] Margaret Pelagia decided not to pay the marital debt and escaped at midnight: they 'kut of here here and cloþed here in mannys cloþing and fledde ferre into a monastery of monkes and called herself Pelagien'.[79] In donning male clothing, cutting their hair, and taking on masculine names, the saints eliminate the signifiers of their femininity. Whereas previous scholars have noted this as breaking with their former lives or denouncing their womanhood, I argue that the transformation is necessary for the saints to retain their bodily status.[80] With the consistent threat of external and internal forces that seek to corrupt the female body, it is only through being read as male that they can protect their borders and retain their interiority: the virgin female body.[81] Despite the intrinsic link between virginity, bodily purity and virility, retaining virginity was not enough – it needed guarding.[82] Abdalla's research on trans* saints concluded that their male disguise allowed them to inhabit perfect feminine roles, such as the virgin, mystic or mother.[83] In viewing the trans*

[76] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; ''Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 177, II. 249-50.
[77] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, pp. 177-8, II. 260-319.
[78] 'St. Margaret Pelagia' *Gilte Legende*, p. 747, II. 12-13.
[79] 'St. Margaret Pelagia' *Gilte Legende*, p. 747, II. 19-20.
[80] Bullough, 'Transvestism in the Middle Ages', p. 1386; Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', pp. 4, 18; M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite: Myths and Rites of the Bisexual Figure in Classical Antiquity* (London: Studio Books, 1961), pp. 84-102; J. Anson, 'The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif,' *Viator*, 5 (1974), 1-32 (p. 5).
[81] See the Introduction, 'Gender in the Middle Ages' and Chapter Two, 'The Female Body as Opened and Enclosed'.
[82] St. Jerome's letter to Eustochium, paragraph 23 states 'We must proceed by a different path, for our purpose is not the praise of virginity but its preservation. To know that it is a good thing is not enough: when we have chosen it we must guard it with jealous care.' See 'St. Jerome, Letter 22: to Eustochium', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene* Fathers. Revised and edited for online viewing by Kevin Knight, available at: St. Jerome, 'Letters of St. Jerome: Letter 22: To Eustochium', *New Advent* (2020) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> [accessed 6 January 2019] (para. 23).
[83] Abdalla, 'Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman', in *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Karant-Nunn, p. 18.

saints body as a text, I complement Abdalla's argument by suggesting that the 'becoming male' narrative guards their bodies, upon which new discourses can be written.[84]

In contrast, the crises of penitent trans* saints' that lead to them putting on male clothing does not come from a desire to maintain their current bodily status, but to revert to a previous state before they sinned. The trans* saints St. Theodora and St. Pelagia are both described as noble and fair women. However, their narratives follow the style of the penitent saints, such as St. Mary Magdalene and St. Mary of Egypt. Their faith is centred on sorrow for their past lives. St. Theodora was led to adultery due to the devil's envy of her holiness. Once they had realised the sin they had committed, they 'wept bitterly and bete [their] visage, saying: 'Alas to me, alas to me, for I haue loste my soule and destroyed the beauute of my name'.[85] Theodora sought the comfort of an abbess, who informed them that their sin could not be hidden from God. In response, Theodora waited until their husband left the house, took the clothing of a man, and travelled to a monastery. At the monastery the monks 'graunted her and asked her name, and she saide her name was Theodore'.[86] In taking a masculinised version of their name after lamenting that their sin had destroyed the 'beauty' of their old name, Theodora appears to be expunging themself of their natural gender.[87] As sexual transgression is entwined with the female sex in medieval thought, by erasing their female name, they can erase all traces of sin.[88] Larissa Tracey argued that as Theodora went to the abbess for advice but did not seek refuge at the nunnery, the text demonstrated how they must completely disavow their female

[84] Horner, 'Saint's Lives', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, ed. by McAvoy and Watt, pp. 95-102 (p. 95).
[85] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 457-461 (p. 457, II. 21-23).
[86] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, p. 458, II. 37-38. The verb 'graunted' means to permit.
[87] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 18.
[88] Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 24-5, 48; Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, p. 20; Charles T. Wood, 'The Doctor's Dilemma: Sin, Salvation, and the Menstrual Cycle in Medieval Thought', *Speculum*, 56, (1981), 710-27; Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p. 7; Denise Nowakowski Baker, 'Soul', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, p. 770-771 (p. 771).

sex for absolution.[89] However, as this chapter shows, Theodora's body continues to do female things in the text, which question this reading.

The 'Life of St. Pelagia' followed a similar narrative pattern. Pelagia is described as 'þe worthiest in þe cite of Antioche […] she was right faire of bodi, noble of cloþing, veyn and variable of corage and vnchaste of here bodi'.[90] Despite Pelagia's noble clothing and fair appearance, Pelagia is 'weak in spirit' and has polluted their body with sexual activity; as the Bishop Noyron of Leopoleos commented, 'she doeth grete [besinesse] in peyntyng hire for to plese worldly louers'.[91] Pelagia's outward appearance acts as a signifier for her sin and internal corruption. After Bishop Noyron witnessed and condemned Pelagia, he had a vision/dream:

> It semed him in his slepe þat he was at his mass and þat a blakke dove al defouled fly besily abought him, the which þan commanded þat all þei shuld voide þat were not baptized, and anone þe dowue vnappered. And after mass she came ayene and of þe same bishop she was plunged in a vessel of water, and þan she went oute white and clene and fly so hie þat she miȝt not be seyne, then he awoke.[92]

The day after the bishop received this vision, Pelagia came to his church to hear him preach. They fell at his feet in front of the crowd and wept, 'I am Pelagien, moder of wickednesse, þe flode of synnes, þe depnesse of perdicion. I am the deuourer of soules. Many haue I deceived, þe which nowe I lothe hem all'. The bishop's vision acts as a foreshadowing of Pelagia's repentance, for he then goes on to baptise them and set their penance. However, the imagery and language demonstrate this is not an act of Pelagia rejecting their female sex, but the flesh as a redemptive instrument. The black dove that is cleansed back to white after baptism represents the ability to return to an original bodily state before the act of sinning. As discussed in previous chapters, Pelagia's body is similar to Eve's. Pelagia's description of themself as a

[89] *Women of the Gilte Legende*, p. 89.
[90] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, pp. 744-747 (p. 744, II. 1-3).
[91] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 745, II. 23-24.
[92] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 747, II. 27-33.

deceptive mother of wickedness and sin alludes to the act of Original Sin. Eve, as the first woman, can be read as the 'mother', who, through her deeds, plunged humanity into a state of hereditary sin. Therefore, Mary becomes the second 'mother', whose double sacrifice in the birth and martyrdom of her son cleansed humanity of sin. As Mary's deeds compensated for Eve's sin, so can Pelagia's transgressive opened female body be restored to its enclosed, chaste state. Pelagia's repentance models itself on the Virgin Mary overcoming Eve's sins but in a sanctified, imitable way. The flesh as a redemptive tool insinuates that one does not have to erase one's past, former life or sex to achieve sanctity. The cultural narratives upon the body can be rewritten and the 'original' self that was united in soul and body can be restored.

To further emphasize this reading of the flesh as a redemptive tool, I will refer to how Pelagia's hagiography explains their renaming. When the bishop asked Pelagia their name, they replied, 'for my birthe I am called Pelagian, but for þe pompe and pride of myn araie men callen me Margarete.'[93] After their baptism, the fiend referred to Pelagia as 'Lady Margarete' and questioned what harm he had done to them: 'haue I not araied þe with all riches and glorie? [..] I beseche þe that þou forsake me 'not' lest I be made reproue to cristen men'.[94] The fiend refers to Pelagia by the name they used when they were a prostitute. This name stands as a mark that intrinsically links the female flesh with the negative attributes of temptation and the devil. However, Pelagia 'made þe sign of the crosse and bkewe vppon him and he soddenly vanish[ed] awey.'[95] This image signals the restoration of Pelagia's flesh, which is enabled through their faith and Christ's message. Whereas previously Pelagia was the signifier of sin, now they reject the devil. As Mary 'turned Eve's name backwards', so Pelagia's restoration of her birth name indicates her redemption from the temptations of the flesh.[96]

[93] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 745, II. 48-49.
[94] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 746, II. 57-61.
[95] 'St. Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 746, II. 61-62.
[96] In reference to Eve-Ava, see Chapter Three, 'The Redemptive Flesh'.

Pelagia's penance takes them to the Mount of Olyvete where they take the habit of a hermit and enclose themself in a cell, serving God in abstinence. Their rich, flamboyant clothing is exchanged for those of chaste austerity. Through their clothing they are metaphorically disregarding the earthly temptations of the flesh and reuniting themself with the spirit and God.[97] Pelagia is held in great fame and is known by the people as Frere Pelagien. Pelagia's decision to not use a new name but a masculine version of their old name represents the restoration of their former existence and their original chaste body; they have not abandoned 'Pelagia' but indicate the redemptive possibilities of the self through the flesh.

Past scholarship has mainly focused on this initial crisis or complication that led the trans* saints to enter monastic life as men. However, there is a second threat in the texts that occurred as an unwanted sexual advancement followed by an accusation of rape. As discussed below, this threat attempts to 'correct' the trans* saints gendered bodies, for it either forces them into revealing their biological sex or into the role of childrearing.

The Trans* Saint as Virgin Martyr

In my chapter about the lives of virgin martyrs, I discussed anxieties that stemmed from women's exterior beauty that was believed to have the ability to draw men into lust and lead them astray from their dedication to God.[98] Trans* saints' threat of exposure links with their bodies creating sexual desire in others; their femininity is always read as a threat even when in male disguise.

The *Gilte Legende's* 'Life of St. Eugenia' and the Vernon G*olden Legend's* 'Life of St. Euphrosyne' demonstrate this threat as a mark of bodily femininity that they cannot escape.

[97] Abdalla, 'Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman', in *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Karant-Nunn, p. 30.
[98] Claire M. Waters, 'Dangerous Beauty, Beautiful Speech: Gendered Eloquence in Medieval Preaching', pp. 51-63.

Euphrosyne's fairness and desirability to men are referred to throughout their life. In childhood, they are described as 'meke & mylde […] goodlich & feir of face'.[99] In their adolescence, they are desired for 'hir wisdam & hire feirnesse'.[100] Even as a monk, Euphrosyne's fellow brothers are enamoured with Euphrosyne's youthfulness. When Euphrosyne revealed their new name 'Smaragdus' to the abbot, he responded 'þou art ful ȝyng'.[101] Youthful beauty is often associated with virgin martyr saints. It is poignant that when Euphrosyne admitted to a monk that they did not wish to marry, the monk implored Euphrosyne to not let a man befoul them for the sake of their 'fairnesse, þat is so briht'.[102] Euphrosyne's youth stands as a signifier of the purity of their body. As a young woman, Euphrosyne was at a crossroad of their life 'untouched by the episodes of marriage, sex, and motherhood which mark the lives and bodies of adult women'.[103] However, as their decision was to live their life as a monk this comment also demonstrates how medieval ideals of youth and beauty transcended strict definitions of sex. Not only does the trans* saint's youth make their transition to live as a male more believable, but it also echoes Ambrose's commentary on the Gospel of St. John:[104]

> Quae non credit, mulier est, et adhuc corporei sexus appellatione signatur: nam quae credit, occurrit in virum perfectum, in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi, carens jam nomine saeculi, corporis sexu, lubrico juventutis, multiloquio senectutis.
>
> [The one who does not believe is woman and still designated by the name of the sex of the body, whereas the one who believes progresses to the perfect

[99] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103r; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 174, II. 40.
[100] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103r; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 174, II. 52.
[101] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103r; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 177, II. 305.
[102] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103r, 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 176, II. 158-9.
[103] Phillips, 'Maidenhood as the Perfect Age of Woman's Life', in *Young Medieval Women*, ed. by Lewis, Phillips and Menuge, pp. 1-24 (p. 1).
[104] Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man*, p. 11; Saisha Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 45, 2 (2009), 138–74. (p. 139, p. 159); D. G. Koslin, 'The Dress of Monastic and Religious Women as Seen in Art from the Early Middle Ages to the Reformation' (unpublished doctoral thesis, New York University, 1999), p. 148; Gopa, 'A Virgin acts Manfully: Aelfric's Life of St. Eugenia and the Latin Versions', p. 13; Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. 43.

> man, to the measure of Christ's adulthood, now lacking the name of the world, the sex of the body, the seductiveness of youth, the talkativeness of old age.][105]

Ambrose's words demonstrate the lengths Euphrosyne has gone to in order to dedicate themself to Christ; they have given up their name, and now they wish to give up the other signifiers of their sex: their youth and fairness. Unfortunately for Euphrosyne, the text does not let this go easily, as the 'threat' of their femininity is always lingering. Even as Smaragdus, they are so fair in features that the devil tempts their brothers in idle thoughts. Once the abbot is aware of the monks' desires, he informed Smaragdus: 'sone, þi grete feirenes makeþ vr breþuren to þenken amis, þerfore I comaunde þou sitte alone in a celle, nowhoder to gone'.[106] Even in male disguise as Smaragdus, Euphrosyne cannot escape the fairness of their body; the mark of the female flesh as carnal, creating lust and desire in men still follows them. As both a woman forced to turn to male disguise and a fair-faced monk, Euphrosyne/Smaragdus lives on the margins of society, doing penance for the sins of others.

Comparably, the *Gilte Legende* 'Life of St. Eugenia' does not comment on their fairness to the same extent as the Vernon G*olden Legend's* 'Life of St. Euphrosyne'. However, St. Eugenia's life does include the narrative crisis of an unwanted sexual advance when Eugenia is in male disguise. As a representative of the Church, Eugenia is called upon to attend Melancie, a noble lady of Alexandria, when she is ill. The text reads:

> Saint Eugenie had anointed with an oynentment and heled her of her quarteine in the name of Ihesu Crist, and she sent her mani yeftes but she resseiued none. And this same lady went that Frere Eugenie had be a man and visited hym ofte, and beheld the semelihede and the beauute of his bodi so that she was right feruently take with his loue, and was full of anguisshe for to bethenke her how she might bringe this frere to her wreched consent. And thane she feined herself sike, and sent to seke that

[105] Translation by Robert Mills, quoted in Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, p. 207. The quotation is from Ambrose's *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* during his commentary on John 20:15 after the resurrected Christ asks Mary Magdalene why she weeps.
[106] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 178, II. 337-340.

> frere to come and to haue pitee of her. And whanne he was come, she told hym how she was sike for hym and how she brent in the couetise of his loue, and praied hym to fullfell her wretched desire, and with that she clipped hym and wolde haue cussed hym.[107]

This extract demonstrates how Melancie's affection for Eugenia began during a moment of feminine tenderness. There is evidence that both men and women tended to the ill during the late middle ages. However, due to women's association with the domestic space, they were particularly associated with the sick-bed.[108] This is emphasised by Eugenia's pronouns remaining as 'she/her' when they anoint and pray for Melancie. Even in reading this extract as a monk attending to a patient, the act would have been seen as feminine.[109] Monks would often declare themselves to be weak women and take on stereotypical feminine roles, such as tending to the sick, as a positive assertion of humility.[110]

Although the reader is aware of Eugenia's double performance, Melancie mistakes Eugenia for a man and falls in love with them. The text then builds Melancie up as the polar opposite of Eugenia. Whereas Eugenia is 'gracious' and 'beautiful', Melancie's love is described as a form of bodily suffering – it is fiery, full of anguish, and wretched; 'she was sike for hym'. Eugenia is appalled by Melancie's advance and chastises her as a 'derke doughter of derkenesse, frende of the fende, norissher of cruell pollucion, suster of lecherie'.[111] Eugenia's words play on Melancie's name, which is derived from the Greek *melanthes* (black), highlighting the importance of a name and how it is linked to a person's identity. This crisis also creates a virgin/whore dichotomy in the text.

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[107] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p 668, II. 51-62.
[108] Hollie L. S. Morgan, *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities* (York: York Medieval Press, 2017), p. 207; Jennifer Ward, *Women in Medieval Europe 1200-1500* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
[109] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 144.
[110] Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, p. 207.
[111] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 668, II. 64.

In Aelfric's Old English version of the 'Life of St. Eugenia', Roy Gopa contended that the confrontation between Melancie and Eugenia does not demonstrate the contrast between a wicked woman and a woman who has 'behaved manfully', but between two kinds of women: the prostitute and the virgin. Gopa argued that Eugenia is not praised for transcending their sex by donning male disguise but by overcoming the weakness of female sexuality with their virginity.[112] There are few differences between the *Gilte Legende's* and Aelfric's portrayal of St. Eugenia aside from the repetition of Eugenia acting 'manfully'. With this omission in the text, I would argue the Middle English version should not be read as between two different types of women but alluding to the potential of the redemptive and restorative flesh.[113]

Melancia is characterised as a woman who is adhering to her nature. However, the lexicon of sickness that surrounds her affections alludes to the possibility of a cure. Likewise, like the black dove in the 'Life of St. Pelagia', the 'darkness' linked with her name can be washed away through faith. When Eugenia refuses Melancia's advances, Eugenia is accused of rape and put on trial. In the trial, Melancia is given a chance to repent when her chambermaid is brought forth to 'bere witnesse of oure wrechidnesse, so that the lesyngges of hem may be reproued'.[114] Melancia does not take this opportunity. Eugenia becomes the only trans* saint to take charge of their narrative by boldly declaring 'the tyme of silence is passed and now it ys tyme to speke'.[115] Eugenia then exposes their breasts, proving their innocence and the restorative power of the flesh. For it is not Eugenia's act of male disguise that results in their exaltation and virility but the signifier of their 'perfect femininity': their virginal body. As Melancia and her clothing are burnt by a 'fire fro heuene', Eugenia is 'clothed richely in clothes of golde'.[116] Whereas Melancia's status is stripped from her, Eugenia's virginal, and

[112] Gopa, 'A Virgin acts Manfully: Aelfric's Life of St. Eugenia and the Latin Versions', p. 16.
[113] Peter Brown concludes that despite being a weak vessel the body was also a vehicle for redemption. Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 24-5, p. 48.
[114] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 669, II. 87-88.
[115] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 669, II. 92-93.
[116] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 669, II. 106-108.

significantly, female, body is promoted to a higher status.[117] The shift in narrative that ends Eugenia's life as a virgin martyr hagiography further highlights their advancement in status. After the trial, Eugenia is reunited with their family, whom they convert to Christianity alongside many others, and is eventually martyred for their beliefs.

The trans* saint as a virgin martyr can be seen beyond the narrative pattern of the texts. Often in iconography, trans* saints were overtly feminised with their long hair and female dress restored in death, in addition to their birth names or deadnames.[118] Artists and illuminators tended to depict the narrative conclusion: the restoration of the trans* saints' female identity.[119] This restoration poses issues for recognition of the trans* saint as a 'cross-dresser' in a medieval sense; unless one is aware of the saint's narrative, their actions are erased.[120] However, the scholarship that addresses this issue has brought attention to St. Eugenia's iconography at the moment they expose their breasts as an instance of being 'visibly trans'.

Robert Mills has commented on the twelfth-century carving of Eugenia on trial, situated in the North aisle of the nave in Vézelay Abbey, as a demonstration of gender crossing. 'Frozen in time to a moment just before the chest is revealed fully; Eugenia's boyishness lingers even as "he" is on the verge of becoming "she"'.[121] The image of Eugenia donning a male tonsure and opening their male garb to reveal their breasts acts as a *Vierges ouvrantes* statue. The statue is an altarpiece figurine that depicted a Virgin Mary that 'opened' to reveal Christ or the Trinity. These statues demonstrate the combination of the divine and human; the shared flesh of Christ

[117] Gold cloth was the most expensive form of clothing and was seen as a symbol of royalty. See Lisa Monnas, 'Cloth of Gold', in *Encyclopedia of Dress and Textiles in the British Isles, c. 450-1450*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth and Maria Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 132. In 1510, Henry VIII banned anyone below the rank of duke from wearing gold cloth, see Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 89.

[118] Referring to a transgender individual by their birth name is called 'deadnaming', as noted in fn 59.

[119] Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', pp. 150-52; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 200-205.

[120] I have used the term 'cross-dresser' here as that is the closest terminology that would have been meaningful to a medieval audience.

[121] Quote refers to figure 4 from Mills, 'Visibly Trans? Picturing Saint Eugenia in Medieval Art', pp. 548-9.

and the Virgin. Eugenia's act of gender-crossing exhibits this amalgamation. For, as the Virgin Mary is depicted with her breasts modestly exposed to nourish Christ and the saints, so does Eugenia's revelation nourish others in the teachings of Christ. Eugenia 'conuerted to the faithe of God [her] fader and moder and bretheren and alle the meyne' of the city.[122] Eugenia, their mother, and their brothers go to Rome to continue to convert and teach. Eugenia's exposure and deeds act as a symbolic transmission or birthing of the word of God. As Abdalla has pointed out, Eugenia's strength is 'maternal, mystical and feminine.'[123] When Eugenia is eventually martyred, their head is cut off on 'the same day that [Christ] decende[d] doune to the erthe'.[124] Being received by Christ on the same date as his birth alludes to Eugenia's death as a genderless restoration of being 'all one in Christ'.[125] Eugenia's actions align them with both an expression of 'perfect femininity' and 'perfect masculinity'; they are both virile and feminine, both Christ and Mary.

The Trans* Saint as Virgin Mother

For a more explicit reading of some trans* saint as virgin mothers, in addition to the threat of exposure through unwanted sexual attention, three of the trans* saints are forced into the role of childrearing. The *Gilte Legende's* St. Margaret Pelagia is accused of fathering a child with a nun; St. Maurine is accused of impregnating the Franklin's daughter; and St. Theodora is likewise accused by a hostel maid. Whereas past scholarship on the lives of trans* saints has focused on the initial crisis or complication that leads the saint to enter into monastic life in male disguise, it is this crisis that leads to their exaltation as saintly characters.

[122] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende,* p. 669-670, II. 109-110.
[123] Abdalla, 'Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman', in *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Karant-Nunn, p. 33.
[124] 'St. Protus & Hyancinthus', *Gilte Legende*, p. 670, II. 124.
[125] Galatians 3:28.

Like Eugenia, St. Margaret Pelagia is promoted to a high-ranking position. After the keeper of the nunnery dies, Margaret Pelagia as Pelagien is appointed to the position. Pelagien is in charge of ministering to the nuns 'not oonly here bodeli necessitees but also þe gostli pastes of hevenli fode'.[126] Pelagien's position is described using maternal language. Although Pelagien gained this position due to their male gender identity, their body still does female things. They are a 'food generator', nourishing the woman both physically and spiritually.[127] It is also poignant that in the later middle ages visual representations of Christ as the preparer of food or servant outweighed those of Christ as priest or king.[128] Christ, as a preparer or servant of food, represented the spiritual nourishment people received from his sacrificial flesh. This image was mirrored in the symbolic veneration of the Virgin's Mary's body as a dining chamber and her milk her heavenly food.[129] Therefore, the shared flesh acts as a site that provided both physical nourishment through Mary feeding Christ, and spiritual nourishment through Christ's body in the Eucharist. The flesh is highlighted as a space where redemption, sustenance and sacrifice can occur.

The root of Margaret Pelagia's sin is related to the body and the 'essential carnality' of the flesh. The accusation that St. Margaret Pelagia has fathered a child stems from the devil's envy; after they are promoted to the position of master of the nunnery, the devil 'þought 'how he' might put abak his goode name bi som obieccion of syn'.[130] The adverb 'aback' alludes to reverting or withdrawing. Using this term in relation to St. Margaret Pelagia's name alludes to the saint returning to an original state: womanhood. The figure of a 'virgine þat dwelled without þe gates […] [with] here wombe aroos' acts as a reminder of the life St. Margaret Pelagia

[126] 'St. Margaret Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 747, II. 25-27.
[127] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 282.
[128] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 285.
[129] Ellington, *From Sacred Body*, pp. 47, 59, 132, 152; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 81; Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, pp. 62, 313; Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 158; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 132; Gail McMurray Gibson, *Theatre of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 166-8.
[130] 'St. Margaret Pelagia', *Gilte Legende*, p. 747, II. 28-29.

escaped. Despite leaving their social body behind, they are confronted by it.[131] The accusation of fathering a child and the consequential penance acts as a *passio* between the saint's social and natural bodies, dramatizing the conflict between flesh and soul. Like the mother saints of Chapter Three, the complex blend of living a pious life and the societal expectations of the female body creates a dynamic narrative between two opposing forces.[132] Although Margaret Pelagia is not guilty, they take the punishment. The monks banish Margaret Pelagia to a pit inside a rock where they receive small amounts of barley bread and water. They abide by their penance alone, 'moost meekly and moost paciently susteyned and suffred all the wronges and was not troubled in noþing'.[133] By doing penance for the sins of another, Margaret Pelagia is Christ-like in their response to this accusation.

As the end of Margaret Pelagia's life nears, they write a letter to the abbot clearing their name of wrongdoing:

> I of noble kinrede was called Mergarete in þe worlde, but for I wold eschue þe temptacions of þe worlde, I called myself Pellagien. I am a man. I haue not lied for to deceyue, for I haue shewed þat I haue vertu of man, and I haue hadde virtue of þe cryme þat was put vpon me, and I innocence þereof haue do þe penaunce. But I prai yow for as moche as men knew me not for woman, þat þe holy susteres mai beri my bodi so þat þe shewing of me dying be clensing of my lyving, and þat þe wymmen know þat I am a virgine þat thei iuged for a vouterer.[134]

By writing this letter St. Margaret Pelagia restores both of their good names: that of the noble virgin Margaret and the virtuous monk Pelagien. Amongst all the known trans* saints' lives from both Old and Middle English, Margaret Pelagia is the only one who boldly proclaims that they are a man, for they have shown masculine virtue by accepting the penance for the crime

[131] For discussions on the social body of the mother saint, see Chapter Three, 'Recoding the Womb of the Mother Saint' and 'Motherhood as Martyrdom'.
[132] See Chapter Three, 'Motherhood as Martyrdom' in this thesis. Also see Gaunt, 'Saints, Sex, and community: Hagiography' in *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, pp. 180-234 (p. 186).
[133] 'St. Margaret Pelagia', *Gilte Legende,* p. 748, II. 42-43.
[134] 'St. Margaret Pelagia', *Gilte Legende,* p. 748, II. 47-55.

of another. Although Margaret Pelagia can be read as a transgender saint for this declaration, their gender identity and body remain contested. Despite this assertion of manhood, it is Margaret Pelagia's virginal female body that is the mark of their innocence. Margaret Pelagia emerges as a queer body, simultaneously feminine and masculine; even in male disguise, their body acts as a maternal nurturer and exhibits Christological qualities through accepting the sin of another and their innocence being revealed only after death. Through Margaret Pelagia's virtue and virginity, they act out 'perfect masculine' and 'perfect femininity' within one body, demonstrating the archetypal virgin body as Christ's body.

The lives of St. Maurine and St. Theodora repeat this narrative pattern of the saint taking on the role of caregiver for a child they're accused of fathering. When St. Maurine is confronted about the accusation that they have conceived a child by the Franklin's daughter, Maurine answers: 'Holy fader, I aske oure Lorde mercye, for I haue synned.'[135] Maurine accepts another's sin (for the text informs the reader it was a knight whom the Franklin's daughter had laid with) and endures the necessary penance. In the Harley MS 2253, this encounter is explicitly described as 'ageyn the pes.'[136] The description of the act as 'against the peace' or unlawful implies Maurine has been accused of rape. Amy Vines argued that in medieval romance literature, rape functioned as a means of articulating chivalric masculine identity; in contrast, the accusation of rape aids in expressing Maurine's female identity.[137]

Following the conventional narrative pattern of a trans* saint *vita*, Maurine is banished from the monastery and dwells outside the gates for three years in poverty. When the child is born, it is sent to 'this sely Maurine [who] mekely and paciently toke this childe and cussed it and wepte sore and kept it tenderly to her pouere and thanked God of all in gret pacience.'[138] Before this scene, the text used he/him pronouns when discussing Maurine's

[135] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 372, II. 26.
[136] MS Harley 2253, fol. 64^{v}, II. 99.
[137] Vines, *Women's Power in Late Medieval Romance*, pp. 85-114.
[138] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 372, II. 33-35.

accusation and penance. Reverting to she/her at this moment with the child demonstrates an act of tender motherhood. The descriptive terms meek, patience and tender not only allude to Maurine's femininity but the Virgin Mary, who also raised a child as a virgin mother. In receiving the child and keeping it tenderly, Maurine unites both the female social body they had rejected since childhood and their subjective body as the monk 'Maurine'. In their death, Maurine continues their Marian role, acting as an intercessor. When they die, the sin of fathering a child reverts to the Franklin's daughter. The text reads: 'the woman that defamed that holy Maryn was vexed with a fende and confessed her felonye and come to the sepulture of this virgine and was heled'.[139] Like the virgin martyrs St. Catherine and St. Christina, Maurine's tomb is considered a place where many notable miracles occurred due to their intercession. Through their actions, Maurine achieves 'perfect masculinity', through living like a monk and accepting the sin of another as Christ did, and 'perfect femininity', by emulating the biologically impossible role of the virgin mother.

The *Gilte Legende's* St. Theodora maintains a similar narrative pattern. When dwelling in a hostel, a maid approached Theodora desiring to sleep with them. They refused; the maid slept with another and fell pregnant, which she blamed on the 'monke Theodore'.[140] The mother sent the child to Theodora's abbot after its birth. Despite praying meekly for forgiveness, Theodora and the child were banished: 'the abbot toke her the childe and shoued her oute of the gates and bade her kepe with sorugh that she hadde gete in so gret synne and shame, and ,vij yere she norrished that childe with melke of bestes.'[141] Following the same narrative structure as St. Maurine, Theodora's pronouns change back to she/her when they are sanctioned to tend to the child. The reference to feeding the child with 'beast's milk' indicates that Theodora's body did not undergo the necessary changes for motherhood, for they did not

[139] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 373, II. 73-75.
[140] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, p. 459, II. 69.
[141] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, p. 459, II. 72-75.

have sexual intercourse or birth the child. It was also common to feed young babies goat's milk instead of breast milk in infancy.[142] Theodora acts as a wet nurse and is referred to later on in the text as a 'norice'.[143] Despite being in male disguise, Theodora takes on an important female role in medieval society.[144] The wet nurse provided both physical and spiritual nourishment to a young child.[145] The most recognisable image of the nursing mother would have been the Virgin Mary. In late medieval thought, the Virgin Mary was considered a Eucharistic symbol and 'the wet nurse' of salvation because of the connection between breast milk and blood.[146]

Unlike Maurine, Theodora is not a virgin. Theodora's decision to join a monastery was to do penance after committing adultery. Therefore, Theodora acts as an embodiment of Eve: a sexualised woman tricked by the devil. This act of restoration is further established by Theodora receiving multiple visits from the devil when they are caring for the child. They are tested with a vision of wild beasts who come to eat them, a band of knights commanding them to worship their prince, a mountain of gold, and a plate of meats delivered to them by a man who desired them to 'ete it, for thou dedest that be vnconninge'.[147] The image of the devil tempting them with food mirrors Eve in the garden of Eden being offered the apple. This motif alludes to Theodora's first act of sin, where they were unknowingly outwitted by the devil who tempted them into adultery. In Theodora's new role as maternal nourisher, they bless themself and resist the fiend's temptation. Again, their faith acts as a shield; a new discourse written

[142] Phillip Gavitt, 'Breastfeeding and Wet-nursing', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Schaus, pp. 93-94 (p. 93).
[143] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, p. 461, II. 140.
[144] Phillip Gavitt, 'Breastfeeding and Wet-nursing', p. 93; Sandy Bardslet, *Women's Role in Middle Ages* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), p. 115; Valerie Fildes, 'The Culture and Biology of Breastfeeding: An Historical Review of Western Europe', in *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, ed. by Patricia Stuart-Macadam and Katherine A. Dettwyler (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 101-126 (p. 102).
[145] Bardsley, *Women's Roles in the Middle Ages*, p. 76. Estella Antoaneta Ciobanu offers a good overview on the theological concerns of the practice in relation to anti-Semitism during the period. See Ciobanu, *The Spectacle of the Body in Late Medieval England*, pp. 194-195.
[146] Rebecca Lynn Winer, 'Conscripting the breast: lactation, slavery and salvation in the realms of Aragon and kingdom of Majorca, c. 1250-1300', *Journal of Medieval History*, 34, 2 (2008), 164-184 (p. 177).
[147] 'St. Theodore', *Gilte Legende*, p. 460, II. 99.

upon their flesh to protect and redeem themself. Through their act of motherhood, Theodora can atone for their sin by becoming the archetypal female – the 'virgin mother'. Theodora's actions parallel Mary as the 'Second Eve', whose obedience at the Annunciation brought salvation to humanity after the Fall.[148] Theodora's act of 'virgin motherhood' redeemed their transgressions, just as Mary's body signified the original chaste 'enclosed' state of Eve that can be restored through religious obedience and sacrifice.

The Trans* Saint Embodying the Shared Flesh

As discussed, throughout the middle ages, gendered attributes were broken down into 'masculine' and 'feminine' categories and were believed to be qualities one could acquire. Maleness was associated with a higher level of morality and virtuosity, achieved through adhering to a strict pious life.[149] The trans* saints demonstrate the early Christian Church's metaphorical language that praised women for overcoming the weakness of their sex: in other words, they 'become man' in their devotion to Christ. Despite following the narrative of 'becoming men', the threat of exposure and the sexual threat of their female body follows them. The text consistently tries to 'correct' or 'reveal' their sexed bodies through the sexual advances of others. However, this does not detract from their actions and performances of their gendered bodies but aids in their achievement of 'perfection'. Through their roles as both monk and mother, the trans* saints demonstrate the queer body of Christ: both 'perfect man' in his deeds, and 'perfect woman' through his flesh solely derived from his mother, the Virgin Mary. As previous chapters have also addressed, through the motif of the shared flesh, it is shown that the Virgin is not alone but an important part of Christian bodily identification. This multiple and nuanced understanding of the medieval body aids in women's subjectivity being

[148] Theologians such as Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen all emphasized Mary's role as a second Eve. See Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion,* p. 40.
[149] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist,* p. 178.

understood as part of a queer understanding of a theological bodily narrative. This reading is demonstrated most aptly in the narrative motif of lineage found in the hagiography associated with trans* saints.

The significance of naming and clothing is a prevalent theme in all the trans* saints' lives, which enabled them to be read as multiple identities residing in one body. The Vernon *Golden Legend's* 'Life of St. Euphrosyne' described their entrance into the monastic life:

> He ros vp, as heo him beede,
> And cut þe her of hire hede,
> And cloþede hire in a cote good,
> And preyed to him þat diȝed on rood
> And seide: 'Lord god in trinite,
> Þow saue þi seruant þat loueþ þe!'[150]

By cutting Euphrosyne's hair and changing their clothing, they are 'cleansed' of the signifiers of both their femininity and nobility. The prayer to the Lord in 'trinity' suggests Euphrosyne's own ability to become multiple: they shed themself of the singular 'maiden' (prevalent in the texts of Chapter Two's virgin martyrs) to become both maiden and man; both Mary and Christ.

This reading of Euphrosyne is also apparent in their lineage. When Euphrosyne ran away, their father, Pathucius, lamented their disappearance:

> Allas, my douȝter ho haþ defuilet?
> Allas, what wolf my lomb haþ spied?
> Allas, what place þat hire haþ wriȝed?
> Allas, for deol I doupe and dare,
> I clyne as cleyȝ, Icauȝt in care,
> I wayle, I wander, I wake, I walke,
> I stune, I stoned, vnstabli I stalk,
> For hire þat was so witti and wys,
> Of alle gentrise heo bar þe prys.

[150] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 177, II. 251-256.

> Allas, eorþe, þou dost me pyne,
> Þou hulest þe blod of Eufrosyne.[151]

In this extract, Euphrosyne is called a lamb, paralleling Christ's description as the 'lamb of God'.[152] Their father's grief mirrors that of the Virgin Mary. His words (that the earth has done him pain for it holds the blood of his daughter) alludes to Mary's lamentation of Christ at the cross. For Christ's blood was shed to cleanse both Heaven and Earth.[153] Euphrosyne and Pathucius's sorrow parallels each other throughout the text, demonstrating a shared suffering between them. In their despair at Euphrosyne's forced marriage and Pathucius's failed search for his lost daughter, they both sought comfort from the abbot: 'at his feet [..] fel adoun' calling for the father's help.[154] The abbot sent each of them to another monk for advice and comfort. For Euphrosyne, the monk they confided in helped them join the monastery. For Euphrosyne's father, he is sent to his daughter, who is disguised as the monk Smaragdus. Upon recognising their father, Euphrosyne wept: 'wiþ teres [Euphrosyne] was folfulde'.[155] Euphrosyne's father believed this to be tears of devotion, and so Euphrosyne wept whilst blessing him and telling him a tale of devotion. Euphrosyne informed him:

> how men scholde kepen hem out of sin [..] wiþ good lyuinge and chastite, wiþ almesdede and charite, and […] men scholde not heore children loue more þen god […] sire, trustne to me, God wol neuere deseyuen þe: for, ȝif þi douȝter weore ouȝwher amis God wolde schewe þe of his godnes [..] to god I haue pried wiþ herte & þouȝt, to send þe soffraunce, as he þe wrouȝt, and to folfulle al þi desyre.[156]

Euphrosyne's words combine affective piety with rational Christian teachings. Their tearful and sincere comfort reverses the roles between father and daughter: Euphrosyne takes on a

[151] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fols 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 178, II. 383-394.
[152] John 1:29: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
[153] Colossians 1:20: and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
[154] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, pp. 175, 179, II. 106, 438.
[155] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 179, II. 456.
[156] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 103^{r}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 176, II. 179-180.

maternal role towards their father. Euphrosyne's advice offers their father a reasonable explanation of his daughter's actions and Christian teachings on how men should live piously. Euphrosyne demonstrates a cross-gendering of piety that combines both the affective world of the feminine and the rationality of the masculine. This amalgamation of gendered faith comes full circle after Euphrosyne's death. Their father decides to follow in their footsteps by donating all his riches and 'in þe worschip of God he […] dwelled þer wiþouuten lette in þe same selle þer his douȝter was'.[157] Through Euphrosyne's actions, their father experiences a rebirth into faith. Euphrosyne transforms from daughter to their father's surrogate Christian mother and teacher, which allows their faith to live on through their family line.

In the *Gilte Legende's* 'Life of St. Maurine', it is Maurine that follows in their father's footsteps by joining a monastery as his son. Unlike the other trans* saints, Maurine is brought up as a boy from a young age and their decision to continue their life as a holy man is in keeping with their father's wishes before his death. Maurine's upbringing holds questions regarding nature versus nurture, but also how Maurine is best identified. In growing up as Marinus from a young age, it is unclear if Maurine had a true understanding of their gender or virginity, as this was the only life they had known. There is an argument that Maurine's life is an instance of trans erasure, through the changing of their pronouns and their exaltation through their dead name, which also repeats the text's ethos that a woman can never truly 'become man' through faith. However, I argue that Maurine's life demonstrates the fluidity of medieval gender, demonstrated through the shared flesh of Mary and Christ that exalts both masculine and feminine traits.

When Maurine returned to the monastery after completing their penance for being falsely accused of fathering a child, like the mother saints of Chapter Three, Maurine's child is erased from the text, and they 'meekly and patiently' return to their holy work. Some scholars

[157] MS Eng. poet. a. 1., fol. 104^{v}; 'Eufrosyne', *Sammlung altenglischer legenden*, p. 182, II. 655-659.

have suggested that Maurine's submissive and humble nature is infantilising.[158] I argue, however, that their humbleness and contested gender identity aids in their Christological qualities. When Maurine dies, the monks questioned where Maurine should be buried, to which the abbot replied 'in the vilest place that they coulde finde', for Maurine had sinned so greatly they did not deserve to be buried in a holy place amongst their brothers.[159] The monks washed the body to prepare it for Maurine's burial and discovered they were a woman. Ashamed of their previous actions towards Maurine, they run to the abbot to share with him this 'marvel of God'. Like Christ, Maurine's innocence is not revealed until after their death, and significantly, it is their female body that proves their virtue. Their body embodies the shared flesh of Mary and Christ: they are virile in their humility, passivity, and maternal nature. When the abbot discovers Maurine's true sex, he falls to the ground and asks for grace and mercy from God: 'A Holy virgine, foryeue me, for I haue to sore offended God and the. Thou saidest in thi gret mekenesse: "Pater, Paccani", but I may saie for my gret wickednesse: "mater et soror"'.[160] By inverting the phrase 'Father I have sinned' to 'Mother and Sister', the abbot inverts divine power structures. This motif indicates the power of the Mother, the Virgin Mary and the abbot's virgin sister, Maurine. Divine fatherhood is paralleled with divine motherhood. In death, Maurine's holy female body is paraded around the Church in great reverence as they are named 'Holy Marina': the virginal female body becomes a miraculous spectacle within the male space. Maurine, as an archetype of the virgin, has been read as more significant than their *imitatio Christi*, but I would argue that they are dependent on each other. For Maurine is imitating both Christ and the Virgin within one body. Like St. Margaret Pelagia, Maurine is the archetypal virgin who demonstrates how the virginal flesh is Christ's flesh, which he received from his mother, Mary.

[158] Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', p. 150.
[159] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 372, II. 48-49.
[160] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 373, II. 61-64.

Following the standard narrative pattern of these texts, St. Theodora also returned to the abbey after completing seven years of penance. However, unlike the other saints, Theodora returned with their son. After two years, Theodora enclosed herself and their son in a cell and informed the child that their death was near and that they were leaving him 'to God that he be thi fader and thine helper'.[161] By explicitly stating that God will be the child's father, Theodora's motherhood is paralleled with that of divine fatherhood. Theodora has acted as the 'virgin mother', nurturing the child in their faith. Now they have passed, God will take their parental place. This image echoes the Virgin Mary's role as Christ's mother on Earth and her sacrifice in passing him onto his Father in Heaven, through his death. Shortly after Theodora's death, the abbot has a vision of a great wedding attended by all the angels, prophets, saints and martyrs, where a holy woman is worshipped. The woman is Theodora, who was falsely accused of bearing a child and chastised for defiling their marriage bed, but they have been redeemed. The abbot awakes and runs to Theodora's cell, only to discover that they have died. After their death, their ex-husband is brought to the monastery where he takes up residence in his wife's cell until his death. Likewise, Theodora's son goes on to become a great holy man and eventually abbot of the abbey. Although the text succeeds in 'correcting' Theodora's gender by making them both 'mother' and 'nurse', they embed themself in the patriarchal lineage of the monastery. Like the image of the Holy Kinship, which offered a female genealogical alternative to Christ's earthly ancestral roots placing St. Anne at its source, Theodora is placed as the root of a new lineage.[162] For their faith lives on in the monastery through their ex-husband and son. Theodora acts as mother, lover and bride in unison with father, son and spirit. Theodora uses the motifs of the shared flesh of Christ and Mary to define their gender, 'helping [them] orient [their] finiteness by reference to infinity'.[163] The discourse of shared flesh enables

[161] 'St. Marina', *Gilte Legende*, p. 373, II. 73.
[162] See Chapter Three, 'St. Anne and the Birth of the Virgin.'
[163] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 61.

gendered piety to be read not as a 'third gender' but a new disruptive genre of discourse, that redeems and rewrites the cultural markers of the flesh that have separated it from the spirit.[164]

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From examining the Middle English lives of trans* saints a pattern emerged that reflected trends in Mariology during the fifteenth century: the importance of the shared flesh of Christ and the Virgin Mary. The saints do not reject womanhood but reflect both masculine and feminine qualities. They do not become a complex 'third gender' but embody both Mary and Christ. St. Maurine and St. Margaret Pelagia exhibit Christological qualities through accepting the sin of another that enables them to become 'virgin mothers' in their texts. St. Pelagia's and St. Theodora's names stand as examples of the restorative medieval flesh. They are exalted through their birth-names, not their prostitute, adulterer, monk, or hermit names, demonstrating a reversion to their original chaste state, showing how Mary redeemed Eve's transgressions. The importance of the figure of the Virgin Mary and the flesh she shared with Christ emerges as a strong identification tool for medieval women because virginity was an empowering and regenerative tool for the flawed female body. However, because of Mary's maternity, a positive attitude towards motherhood and its sanctifying properties emerged. The call for women to 'become man' in their piety demonstrates the fluidity of gender during the middle ages. It was not a rejection of womanhood, but an amalgamation of the sexes: emotion and rationality, humanity and holiness, motherhood and fatherhood, son and virgin, intercessor and spirit, all demonstrated through the shared flesh of Mary and Christ.

[164] Stone, 'The Empire Strikes Back', in *Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Stryker and Whittle, p. 231.

Conclusion

Sculptures, paintings, frescoes
Devoted to her holiness.
But the only thing about her
We remember:
She was a virgin.[1]

This research has stemmed from a question that has pestered me since my undergraduate days: how do cultural discourses influence our sense of identity? Upon reading Luce Irigaray's essay 'Divine Women', my focus turned to religion and how the gender identity of God affects our readings of ourselves. At the time I was studying for my MA in Medieval Studies and had immersed myself in devotional writing. With my MA thesis demonstrating how female mystics used encounters with the devil to create an active-counter discourse of the self, my thought process led me in the direction of Christ. In medieval iconography, Christ is a complex gendered figure: both simultaneously masculine and feminine in his representation but also essentially male. How did this reading tie-in with Irigaray's notion that one required a God that reflected their gendered identity to create a stable self-narrative?

To investigate my overarching question (do our cultural constructs of gender influence our perception of God and pathways towards piety?), I used hagiographies as a means to trace the cultural and theological motifs of medieval Christianity.[2] The body of the saint was rewritten and reimagined throughout the middle ages, which reflected evolving theology and cultural discourses. By using a lens of trans theory that moves away from binary readings of gender, my research advocates that the shared flesh of Mary and Christ be read as a uniting 'genre' of piety that is written upon the body.

[1] Joy McCullough, *Blood Water Paint* (New York: Penguin Books, 2018), p. 14.
[2] Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500*, p. 63; Wogan-Browne, 'Saint's Lives and the Female Reader', pp. 314-332; Boffey, 'Middle English Lives', in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. by Wallace, pp. 610-634; Salih, 'Introduction: Saints, Cults and Lives in Late Medieval England', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 1-15; Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature*, ed. by Strohm, pp. 335-351; Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. by Salih, pp. 70-86.

Reading the body as a text has proved a useful methodology in understanding evolving theological concerns and the lived past. As Miri Rubin wrote, 'bodies [are] constructed but also lived, never natural or given but always made, experience individually in ways too plentiful to capture'.[3] In looking at the value of trans theory through Stone's scholarship, it is envisioned as a new genre of cultural text that allows us to develop a new understanding of gender outside binaries, closer to the one-sex body model of the middle ages. Trans theory is establishing itself as an important emerging discourse in the field, challenging reader's expectations of the period by showcasing a myriad of identities.[4] Building upon queer theory's application that aided new ways of thinking and questioning gender constructions, sexuality, and structures of power in the middle ages, trans theory further challenges our preconceptions of the past. This is vital in the current climate of medieval studies where inclusive teaching spaces and diverse curricula are essential for our pedagogical practices.

This research fits into a developing critical voice advocating the importance and effectiveness of applying trans theory to the medieval past. In his examination of the textual materiality of the middle ages, Jonah Coman identified a theology of the incarnation that functioned as a 'full-body transvestism', based on the biblical quote 'habitu inventus ut homo' (in habit found as man).[5] Iconography and manuscript illuminations situated Christ's humanity in his clothing, which bled and endured the violence perpetrated against him. This image created the template for a queer *imatatio Christi.* Coman's dissertation also engaged with a trans reading of Christ, whose side wound reflects the transmasculine chest and whose skin colour represents a gendered humoral balance.

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[3] Rubin, 'The Person in the Form: Medieval Challenges to Bodily Order', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Kay and Rubin, pp. 100-122 (p. 100).

[4] Whittington, 'Medieval', pp. 125-129. Also see the volume 'Medieval Intersex: Language and Hermaphroditism', *Postmedieval*, 9, 2 (2018).

[5] Jonah Coman, 'Queering Christ: Habitus theology as trans-embodied incarnation in late medieval devotional culture' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2020); Jonah Coman, '*Trans-historical echoes: a musing on touching books and queer community*, at the Queer Textures of the Past Roundtable International Medieval Conference, Leeds 1-4 July 2019', *Academia* (2019) <https://www.academia.edu/39840207/Trans-historical_echoes_a_musing_on_touching_books_and_queer_community> [accessed 26 May 2020].

Likewise, Blake Gutt has written a manifesto on the application of trans theory to medieval studies, acknowledging it as 'productive and politically significant'.[6] Trans theory is constructive in creating a new exploration and understanding of gender and identity that moves away from exclusively analysing gender through a lens of sexuality. Gutt's work primarily focuses on gender transition in medieval French, English and Latin literary texts. He refuted Janice Raymond's transmisogynist claim that the transition of trans women was a 'rebirth' that purposely excluded the mother in a patriarchal fantasy of men creating men, in his astute reading on *Le Roman de Saint Fanuel.* Gutt argued for St. Fanuel, who gave birth to St. Anne through his thigh, to be recognised as a transgender man. Fanuel experienced body dysphoria about the reproductive capabilities of his body and is simultaneously a mother and a man; his masculinity is not reduced or erased by this.[7] Likewise, in Gutt's exploration of the family tree in *Tristan de Nanteuil,* Blanchandin/e's transformation from female to male is not a subversion of genealogical expectations, but a fulfilment of genealogical necessity; her body is transformed in order to father Saint Giles.[8] In looking back at texts through a lens of trans theory, Gutt argued that we can see an 'affirmation of lives and of identities'.[9]

Alicia Spencer-Hall's research has also engaged with the multiplicity of textual identities. Hall analysed several editions of Marie of Oignies's life to trace how the holy woman's 'symbolic capital' was refashioned.[10] In curating constructed textual identities, Spencer-Hall compared medieval sources to the contemporary, such as the curated lives displayed on social media. Spencer-Hall's first monograph, *Medieval Saints and Modern Screens: divine visions as cinematic experience*, studied divine visions through a lens of

[6] Blake Gutt, 'Transgender Genealogy in Tristan de Nanteuil', *Exemplaria: Medieval, Early Modern, Theory*, 30, 2 (2018), 129-146 (p. 129).
[7] Blake Gutt, 'Medieval trans lives in anamorphosis: Looking back and seeing differently (Pregnant men and backward birth)', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 55, 1 (2019), 174-206 (p. 194).
[8] Gutt, 'Transgender Genealogy in Tristan de Nanteuil', p. 129.
[9] Gutt, 'Medieval trans lives in anamorphosis', p. 205.
[10] Alicia Spencer-Hall, 'Marie of Oignies, of Nivelles, or of Villers: The Multiple Textual Identities of a 13th Century Holy Woman', *Open Library of Humanities*, 11 (2017) 1-34 (p. 4) <http://doi.org/10.16995/olh.88> [accessed 26 May 2020].

contemporary film theory and argued for the possibility of a spectrum of viewing positions that inform both medieval and modern experiences.[11] Blake Gutt and Alicia Spencer-Hall are also co-editing a forthcoming publication entitled *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*. This collection will include an analysis by Sophie Sexton on the queering of Christ's wounds and gender fluidity in medieval manuscripts alongside other interdisciplinary examinations of gender identity in hagiography.[12] Carolyn Dinshaw has been the springboard of this emerging theoretical voice, with the suggestion of the 'possibility of touching across time, collapsing time through affective contact between marginalised people now and then [for] with such queer historical touches we could form communities across time'.[13] This thesis opens up new avenues of research around the function and understanding of the flesh, especially the shared flesh of the Virgin Mary and Christ, the role of the Virgin beyond her position as a 'virgin' in medieval culture, and the value of trans theory in understanding medieval gender outside a binary setting.

It is, of course, hard to specify what constitutes the 'real' medieval. Still, we have evidence that, through these methodologies, we can open up understandings and readings on communities of the past. Denis Renevey discussed how Margery Kempe's body acted as 'the parchment on which God actively encode[d] his signs'.[14] The body acts as a divine message waiting to be read when speech or writing is prohibited or restricted.[15] Likewise, Julian of

[11] Alicia Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints and Modern Screens: divine visons as cinematic experience* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).
[12] *Trans and Genderqueer subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Gutt and Spencer-Hall. Sophie Sexton has discussed her work on the queering of Christ's wounds in a blog post: Sophie Sexton, 'Queering Christ's Wounds and Gender Fluidity in Medieval Manuscripts', *History Matters: History brought alive by the University of Sheffield* (2017) <http://www.historymatters.group.shef.ac.uk/queering-christs-wounds-gender-fluidity-medieval-manuscripts/> [accessed 26 May 2020].
[13] Carolyn Dinshaw, 'Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 13, 2–3 (2007), 177-195 (p. 178). Also see Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
[14] Denis Renevey, 'Margery's Performing Body: The Translation of Late Medieval Discursive Religious Practices', in *Writing Religious Women: female spiritual and textual practices in late Medieval England*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christina Whitehead (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 197-216 (p. 199).
[15] Renevey, 'Margery's Performing Body', p. 199.

Norwich's maternal theology in *Revelations of Divine Love* (c. 1413), which envisioned an all-loving, unconditionally compassionate God, was a controversial revision of hell and sin.[16] In *Le Livre des trois vertus* (*Treasure of the City of Ladies*) (c. 1405) Christine de Pizan promoted virgin martyrs, like St. Catherine, as role models for young girls, encouraging young female readers to 'eagerly read their biographies' and advocated virginity, vocal spirituality, and female literacy.[17] Christine de Pizan was intrigued by the male writers' obsessive interest in the figure of the 'maiden' in hagiography. She was appalled by the levels of violence and wanted to rewrite the male version of the saintly body. In *Le Livre de la cite des dames* (*The Book of the city of ladies*) (c. 1405), Christine de Pizan created a formal response to Jean de Meun's *Roman de le Rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*) (c. 1230-1275) through creating an allegorical city of ladies that defended and honoured famous women throughout history. One of these women was St. Catherine of Alexandria. Christine de Pizan's version of St. Catherine's hagiography began with a disclaimer that through the inclusion of virgin martyrs,

> We shall thus prove that God loves the female sex by showing that He endowed women, just as He did men, with the strength and the fortitude needed to suffer terrible martyrdoms in defence of His holy faith, despite the fact that these women were only tender, young creatures. The whole of womankind can benefit from hearing about the lives of ladies such as these, whose heads are crowned with glory, for the lessons which they impart are more edifying than any others.[18]

Christine de Pizan stated how St. Catherine conducted herself both privately and publicly with great discernment. Unlike other hagiographies that attributed Catherine's eloquence to God's assistance, this text repeatedly stressed her education. Most notably, Christine de Pizan's

[16] *The shewings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Georgina Ronan Crampon (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1994); Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of divine love (short text and long text)*, trans. by Elizabeth Spearing (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1998); Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011).
[17] Christine de Pizan, *The treasure of the city of Ladies or The Book of the three virtues*, trans. by Sarah Lawson. (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 161.
[18] Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Brown-Grant, p. 203.

guide in and queen of the city of ladies is the Virgin Mary. There is a clear parallel between Christine and the Virgin when Christine accepted her God-guided mission to build a city inhabited by virtuous women. She stated, 'behold your handmaiden, ready to do your bidding. I will obey your every command, so be it unto me according to your word'.[19] Imitating the Virgin Mary's reply to Gabriel, Christine firmly placed the ability to speak and interpret the Word in a female voice. She was emboldened to critique the male voice that had failed to articulate female history and redeem her sex by restoring the culturally marked inherently weak and sinful female flesh.

Similarly, through Joan of Arc and Artemisia Gentileschi, we have evidence of how saints assisted in understanding one's identity. The iconography of the archangel St. Michael and the virgin martyrs St. Catherine and St. Margaret would have been known to Joan of Arc and readily available to her when attempting to express the difficult concept of her visions.[20] As Joan's patron saint, Catherine of Alexandria was the main voice that spoke to her and offered her advice, comfort, and aided her discovery of the Sword of Saint-Catherine-de-Fierbois.[21] Similarly, the hagiography of St. Catherine assisted in Artemisia Gentileschi's ability to publicly denounce her rapist, demonstrating how the influence of the saints continued into the early modern period. Gentileschi's courtroom experience and torture in the form of the sibille, which bound and tightened her hands until her bones broke, emulated Catherine's hearing against the scholars and her torture upon the wheel.[22] Gentileschi's self-portrait of herself as Catherine, painted between 1615-1617 after she had won her court case and moved to Florence to marry, shows the textual authority the saints offered women and the power to

[19] Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 15.
[20] Stephen W. Richey, *Joan of Arc: The Warrior Saint* (London: Praeger, 2003), pp. 116-7.
[21] Richey, *Joan of Arc: The Warrior Saint*, p. 105.
[22] *The Artemisia Files: Artemisia Gentileschi for Feminists and Other Thinking People*, ed. by Mieke Bal (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 176; Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: the image of the female hero in Italian Baroque art* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989); Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi around 1622: the shaping and reshaping of an artistic identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Keith Christiansen and Judith Walker Mann, *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

restore and redeem the 'sinful, carnal' female flesh. Through piety, the flesh can be restored as not the site of sin, marked through cultural discourse, but a place that Christ dwells within.

Although women were a useful metaphor for the sins of the flesh, they also offered an ideal example of the redemptive properties of the flesh. In one of Bernard of Clairvaux's (c. 1090-1153) sermons, he used the biblical story of the bleeding woman to demonstrate how the pathway to sin did not deter oneself from connecting with Christ. The sermon stated:

> That woman who had issues of blood [..]. Even though she was afraid to approach Christ, she still made power go out from him. For she secretly touched the hem of his garment and she was cured of her infirmity.[23]

The woman in the passage has an ailment where she continuously bled, likely due to an excessively heavy menstrual flow. Due to the cultural associations of menstruation, she would have been considered unclean theologically and physically. Women's menstruation was a pollutant, thought to cause congenital disabilities, destroyed crops, and even turned wine sour.[24] Excessive bleeding was a sign that the body was not balanced in its humours and excess superfluidities needed to be expelled. Menstruation was considered a sickness for women and a marker of Eve's sin after the Fall. These factors made women a useful universal symbol for the physicality of humanity. As Bernard of Clairvaux explained, the phrase 'issues of blood' applied to all sinners corrupted by the flesh and the physical body.[25] However, despite the negative connotations of the physical body, access to faith is achieved through connection with Christ's humanity. It is once the woman touched the clothing of Christ that her faith healed

[23] *Bernard of Clairvaux Monastic Sermons*, trans. by Daniel Griggs (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), p. 140.
[24] Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe*, p. 86. A famous passage often quoted from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* (c.600-625), which originated from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (AD.77-79), reads: 'on contact with this blood, crops do not germinate, new wines go sour, grasses die, trees lose their fruit, iron is corrupted by rust, air and copper are blackened; which if dogs should eat from it, they are made rabid.' Quote and translation from William F. MacLehose, 'Nurturing Danger: High Medieval Medicine and the Problem(s) of the Child', in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. by John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 3-24 (p. 9).
[25] *Bernard of Clairvaux Monastic Sermons*, p. 140. Bernard partial quotes and analysed 1 Corinthians 15:50 for this reading. 1 Corinthians 15:50 reads: 'what I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption.'

her.[26] The clothing of Christ symbolised a form of supplicant prayer: if one was afraid to approach Christ directly, they could pray to a saint or, the most renowned intercessor, the Virgin Mary.[27] The clothing of Christ was also a recognised symbol for his humanity and the flesh he inherited through his mother. The passage demonstrates a universal pathway to Christianity through the shared flesh of Christ and Mary. Christ's 'fleshy' clothing of humanity offered a new genre of discourse that subverted and disrupted cultural associations and limitations. The woman as flesh stood as a useful metaphor to illustrate how universally the flesh was drawn towards sin but also towards redemption. Bernard of Clairvaux stated in another sermon that it is 'only the second Adam's tribulation [that] cleanses those who are corrupted by the single offense of the first Adam'.[28] Sharing in the suffering of the human Christ is projected as a universal pathway to both men and women.

In moving away from a binary reading of gender, medieval piety is seen as an active union of somatic and contemplative experience to reunite the flesh and the spirit (signified by the masculine and the feminine). Christopher M. Roman's examination of Richard Rolle's piety complements this reading, as Roman has argued that 'Rolle navigate[d] queer, eremitic conduct in order to create an identity always in process'.[29] Roman's study offers an astute interpretation that blends the physical and the ontological. Through Rolle's contemplative discourse on the nature of the hermitic life and the divine, Rolle opens his physical body to celestial experience.[30] His piety is an active discourse of physical and contemplative experienced, for it is the love of God that orients him to the world and the contemplative offerings of his will, heart, and soul that allow him to touch the burning 'fevor' of God.[31]

[26] Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood is included in the Gospels Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, and Luke 8:43–48. Jesus stated 'faith has healed you' to the woman.
[27] *Bernard of Clairvaux Monastic Sermons*, pp. 139-140.
[28] *Bernard of Clairvaux Monastic Sermons*, p. 161.
[29] Roman, *Queering Richard Rolle*, p. 1.
[30] 'Richard Rolle's Eremitic Ontology' and 'The Phenomenology of the Open Body', in Roman, *Queering Richard Rolle*, pp. 25-54, pp. 55-84.
[31] 'The Form of Living', in *Richard Rolle The English Writings*, trans. and ed. by Allen, pp. 152-183.

This discourse of multiplicity and orientation has been evident in the saints' lives throughout this thesis. The male saints of Chapter One used Christ to redefine the definitions of masculinity, such as through the *milites Christi* image. The symbolism of the shared flesh of Mary and Christ was used to project an idealized humoral balance body, devoid of excess. Chapter Two demonstrated how, due to the privileges of virginity, some virgin martyrs united and exemplified the conflicting image of women as enclosed/opened and active/passive in their dialogue and actions. Through Mary's and Christ's shared flesh, the markers of the female body, that deem it a dangerous, permeable space susceptible to sin, were broken down, reversed, and restored, which emulated the redemptive properties of the flesh through devotion. Chapter Three established how some mother saints used the figures of Mary and Christ to legitimize their female bodies and redeem their flesh. These mother saints did not 'become man' and reject the maternal in their piety but expressed a model of female holiness that was not limited to virginity that could become 'one in Christ'. As the Virgin Mary redeemed Eve's sins, so could these mother saints opened maternal bodies be enclosed and redeemed to their original states through the symbolic motifs of the shared flesh, that aligned and reunited the social body with the subjective and the flesh with the spirit. Chapter Four concluded that the trans* saint exemplified the nuances of medieval Christianity's relationship with gender through their identification with Mary and Christ. Through taking on the sin of another, some trans* saints exhibited Christological qualities that allowed them to fulfil the impossible literary role of the virgin mother and to perform both 'perfect femininity' and 'perfect masculinity'.

Through the use of trans theory and Stone's definition of the trans body as a 'genre', the framework challenges the privileged status that 'oneness' and 'wholeness' possessed against a narrative that deemed multiplicity as a problematic and fragmented state of subjectivity. The complicated nature of 'multiplicity' existing in union within one body is

theologically challenged through the understanding of Christ as having two natures that exist without separation, in 'one person and one hypostasis'.[32] Through the Mariological trends of the fifteenth century that focused on Mary's suffering and Christ's humanity, the bodies of Christ and Mary become inseparable in their identification: like Christ's humanity and divinity, they are not divided but exist in union. Christ's two natures are evident through Mary's body, with his humanity derived from his mother's flesh and Mary's bloodless, virginal birth signifying his divinity.

As a new 'genre' of joint humanity and divinity, the shared flesh of Mary-Christ acts as a site of identification, disconnected from gendered binarism, emulating the one-sex body model of the middle ages and the flesh as a redemptive tool. To position Luce Irigaray's argument that female subjectivity was fragmented due to the lack of a female divine within a historical and theological context, the human condition itself was considered fractured in the middle ages. The flesh was at odds with the spirit since the Fall and had marked the body with a conflicting cultural discourse that both desired God and was drawn towards sin.[33] Piety was the answer to stability: not a 'rebirth' but a restoration, a way to reconnect the fissures of the flesh with the spirit. The shared flesh of Mary and Christ acted as a genre that could deconstruct and reunite the cultural discourses that were marked upon the flesh promoting an idealised balance of the one sex body in which to imitate and follow. In this reading, medieval piety becomes a united space of masculine and feminine attributes, aptly signifying the union of the flesh and the spirit.

[32] Weinandy, 'The Doctrinal Significance of the Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon', *in The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. by Murphy and Stefano, pp. 549-567 (p. 560).
[33] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, pp. 55-72 (pp. 61-63).

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